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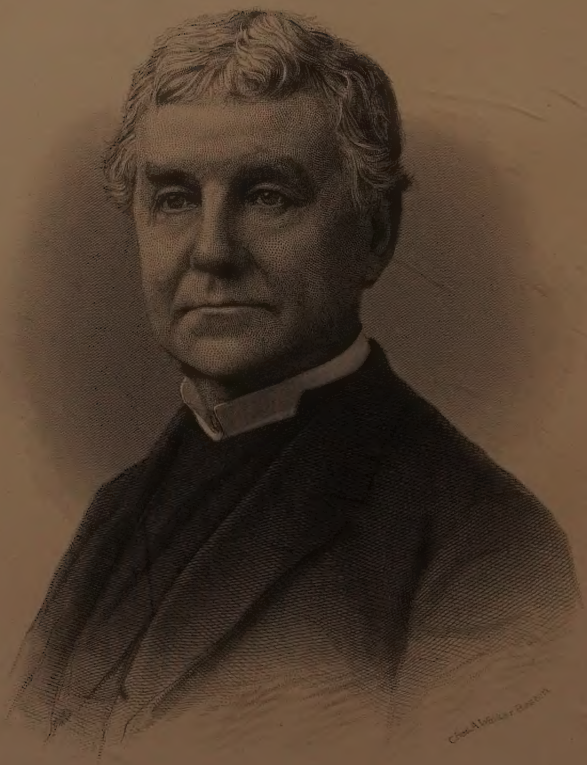

Yours truly
Geo. Leeds

SERMONS

BY THE

REV. GEORGE LEEDS, D.D.

LATE RECTOR OF GRACE CHURCH, BALTIMORE

WITH A PREFACE

BY THE

REV. THOMAS F. DAVIES, D.D.

RECTOR OF ST. PETER'S CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA

NEW YORK

E. P. DUTTON & COMPANY

31 WEST TWENTY-THIRD STREET

1887

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MARYLAND DIOCESAN
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TO

THE PARISHES

WHERE OUR FATHER MINISTERED

THESE SERMONS

ARE AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED

BY HIS DAUGHTERS.

PREFACE.

FEW of the Clergy of the Church have been more widely known or more greatly loved than the late Rector of Grace Church, Baltimore. His life, like that of almost every faithful Parish Priest engaged year after year in the quiet discharge of daily duty, was not rich in striking incidents. But there was in his case such a rare union of the saintly character and fine intellectual gifts, of ripeness of learning and soundness in the faith, of tenderest sympathy and most winning courtesy, of firm beliefs and abounding charity, of fidelity in all duty and cheerful submission to the Divine Will, that it will be a pleasure to all who read this volume to have in this Prefatory Notice a brief record of some particulars of his life.

George Leeds, a son of Benjamin Bass and Sally Babcock Leeds, was born in Boston on the 25th of October, 1816. He received his preparatory training at the Milton Academy, and entered the Freshman Class of Harvard University in 1831. A change in the circumstances of his father rendered it necessary to transfer him to Amherst College, where he entered the Sophomore Class and graduated in 1835.

Having taken the full course of three years in the

Theological Seminary of Andover, he became at once a Candidate for Holy Orders, and in due course of time, was ordained Deacon by the Right Rev. Alexander V. Griswold, D. D., on the 14th of April, 1839, and by the same venerable Prelate was ordained Priest on the 9th of March, 1841.

The chief years of his ministry were spent in Grace Church, Utica, N. Y., St. Peter's Church, Salem, Mass., St. Peter's Church, Philadelphia, and Grace Church, Baltimore. Of the latter Parish he had been the Rector eighteen years, when he was called to his rest and his reward, 15th April, 1885.

Entering upon the rectorship of Grace Church before the excitements and exasperations connected with the Civil war had yet abated, he, by his wisdom, his kindness, his tenderness, proved himself both in that Parish and in the Diocese of Maryland a true Minister of the Prince of Peace. He was the loved and trusted friend of the great Bishop of Maryland. In times of excitement, and alienation of brethren, it was the happy office of Doctor Leeds, in a greater degree perhaps than of any other, to speak words of reconciliation, to allay asperity of feeling, and to bring separated brethren into loving relations with each other. This he effected by his great self-control and by the largeness of his charity. His own opinions were decided and firm, but he had the rare gift of being able to put himself in the place of others, and to look on things from a point of view other than his own.

His Presidency of the Convention which resulted in the choice of the present Bishop of the Diocese, will

be long remembered as an instance in point. Himself a prominent candidate for the Office, by no wish of his own, but from the earnest desire of many of his brethren, he several times received the vote of a majority of the Clergy, but failed of election in consequence of the Constitutional provision requiring a two-thirds vote. His gentle, considerate dignity as the President of the Convention, the wise and loving words of the addresses which he delivered from the chair, and his entire unselfishness had, it is believed, great effect in securing the hearty reception on the part of the Diocese, of the honored and beloved Prelate who now so worthily holds the high office of Bishop of Maryland.

Sometime before his death, Doctor Leeds had been apprised by his medical adviser that he had a serious disease of the heart which might result in a sudden and fatal termination. Such was his habitual submission to his Father's will, and his unfaltering trust in God, that those who knew him best failed to see in him any diminution of his habitual cheerfulness. The only visible effect was a greater earnestness and tenderness in the discharge of his incumbent duty. His sermons, always spiritual and eloquent, because of his profound conviction of the momentous truths which he was commissioned to deliver, became more and more fervent as the end drew near. His graceful style, the result of his thorough classical training, was instinct with a spiritual power which carried comfort to the believer and conviction to the doubting. His life was even more eloquent than his sermons. Those, who, under

his ministry, were visited with sorrow, will never forget the wealth of his sympathy. He wept with those who wept. No comforter was ever more tender, for he himself had been chastised by affliction.

It was his rare privilege to labor until the last and to die with his harness on. In the discharge of his duties as a member of the Board of Managers of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, to whose work he had given untiring service for many years, he went to New York on the 14th of April, 1885, the fifty-sixth anniversary of his Ordination to the Diaconate. On his return to Baltimore he tarried in Philadelphia to pass the night with his dear friend, the Honorable John Welsh, our late minister to England, who has since followed him to the unseen world. He retired to rest apparently in his usual health, and was wakened at midnight by the Bridegroom's summons. After a short hour of suffering, he fell asleep in the Lord, leaving to his children and to the Church, the legacy of a pure and noble life, 'filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.' His remains repose beside those of his beloved wife and only son in Forest Hill Cemetery, Utica, N. Y.

It has been very difficult to select fair and representative sermons from the large number left by Dr. Leeds. These now brought together, save in one instance, were written with no thought of publication.

T. F. D.

St. Peter's, Philadelphia.
Lent, 1887.

CONTENTS.

SERMON I.

CHRIST'S ANSWER TO THE SOUL'S WANTS.

(Grace Church, Baltimore, December 24, 1882.)

PAGE

ISAIAH XXV. 9.—"*And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God: we have waited for Him and He will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.*"..... 1

SERMON II.

THE UPWARD DIRECTION OF A TRUE LIFE.

(Chapel of Lehigh University, June 19, 1881.)

PROVERBS XV. 24.—"*The way of life is above to the wise.*"..... 18

SERMON III.

UNQUESTIONING OBEDIENCE.

(Grace Church, Baltimore, January 14, 1872.)

ST. JOHN II. 5.—"*Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.*"..... 40

SERMON IV.

FILIAL PRAYER.

(Grace Church, Baltimore, March 8, 1885.)

ST. LUKE XI. 13.—"*If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him.*"..... 59

SERMON V.

THE WORLD ASLEEP.

(Grace Church, Baltimore, December 2, 1883.)

PAGE

ROMANS XIII. 11.—"*And that knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep.*" 71

SERMON VI.

A CHRISTMAS SERMON.

(Grace Church, Baltimore, Christmas, 1883.)

ST. JOHN VI. 38.—"*I came down from Heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me.*" 85

SERMON VII.

THE INSPIRATION AND VALUE OF THE BIBLE.

(Grace Church, Baltimore, December 7, 1879.)

ACTS VIII. 30, 31.—"*And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read Esaias the prophet, and said, 'Understandest thou what thou readest?' And he said, 'How can I except some man should guide me?'*" 100

SERMON VIII.

LIFE BY FAITH IN THE SON OF GOD.

(Grace Church, Baltimore, March 1, 1874.)

GALATIANS II. 20.—"*The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*" 115

SERMON IX.

SERVANTS OF RIGHT AND SERVANTS OF CHOICE.

(Grace Church, Baltimore, June 15, 1884.)

ROMANS XIV. 7-9.—"*For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord: and whether we die we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore or die we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and living.*" 128

SERMON X.

ESAU'S BIRTHRIGHT.

(Grace Church, Baltimore, March 15, 1885.)

PAGE

HEBREWS XII. 15-17.—"*Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God..... As Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.*" 145

SERMON XI.

THE LIFE GIVING POWER OF THE GOSPEL.

(Grace Church, Baltimore, Oct. 2, 1870.)

ST. JOHN VI. 68.—"*Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.*" 158

SERMON XII.

A DEFINITE PURPOSE.

(Grace Church, Baltimore, January 21, 1883.)

I CORINTHIANS IX. 26, 27.—"*I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.*" 173

SERMON XIII.

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER.

(Grace Church, Baltimore, February 20, 1876.)

ST. LUKE VIII. 9.—"*And His disciples asked Him, saying, what might this parable be?*" 185

SERMON XIV.

CHARITY.

(Grace Church, Baltimore, February 15, 1874.)

COLOSSIANS III. 14.—"*And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.*" 202

SERMON XV.

THE APPEAL OF CHRIST'S HUMILIATION.

(Grace Church, Baltimore, March 29, 1885.)

PAGE

PHILIPPIANS II. 5–8.—"*Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus: who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men;.....He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*"..... 217

SERMON XVI

ON PRESENTING OUR BODIES A LIVING SACRIFICE.

(Grace Church, Baltimore, January 13, 1884.)

ROMANS XII. 1.—"*I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*"..... 229

SERMON XVII.

MANLY CHRISTIANITY.

(Grace Church, Baltimore, December 2, 1873.)

1 KINGS II. 2.—"*Be thou strong therefore, and show thyself a man.*"..... 243

SERMON XVIII.

ON THE DEATH OF PRESIDENT GARFIELD.

(Grace Church, Baltimore, September, 1881.)

2 SAMUEL III. 34.—"*And all the people wept again over him.*"... 263

SERMON XIX.

"STAND IN THY LOT AT THE END OF THE DAYS."

(Grace Church, Baltimore, September 30, 1885.)

DANIEL XII. 13.—"*But go thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.*"..... 275

SERMON XX.

SUBORDINATION INVOLVED IN THE CHRISTIAN IDEA OF THE TRINITY.

(St. Peter's Church, Salem, June 19, 1859: repeated later.)

ST. JOHN XIV. 28.—"*My Father is greater than I.*" 288

SERMON XXI.

PASSED FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE.

(Grace Church, Utica, before 1854; repeated later.)

ST. JOHN V. 24.—"*Passed from death unto life.*"..... 303

SERMON XXII.

WHAT IS YOUR LIFE.

(Grace Church, Baltimore, January 4, 1874.)

ST. JAMES, IV. 14.—"*What is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.*"
GALATIANS VI. 7.—"*Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap.*"..... 315

SERMON XXIII.

PROVIDENTIAL CARE.

(Date not recorded.)

ST. JOHN VI. 14.—"*Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, 'This is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the world.'*"..... 328

SERMON I.

CHRIST'S ANSWER TO THE SOUL'S WANTS.

"*And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and He will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.*"—ISAIAH XXV. 9.

THE faithful and courageous preacher who stood one time upon the banks of the Jordan was a centre of interest. John the Baptist, who "did no miracle," and therefore attracted no attention to himself by his wonderful works, was a great power in his day among the people of Judea. His announcement was so awakening, his appeal to the sense of accountability was so direct, his instructions were so practical, that, what with the austerity of his life and the peculiarity of his ministrations, he wielded unbounded influence. All classes went out into the wilderness to hear him—the publican even, and the Roman soldier—and under the impression of his solemn discourse asked, "what they should do?" To whom the Forerunner replied in no vague and visionary terms, but with specific directions that were level with their

understanding—aimed at their peculiar faults—"Exact no more than is appointed." "Do violence to no man." "Be content with your wages."

It is not a little remarkable that the Pharisees and Sadducees also were arrested by his preaching, and that at a later period, such a profligate as Herod the tetrarch should have "feared him and observed him, and when he heard him, should have done many things and heard him gladly."

What was the secret of this power? It was twofold. First, it was the extraordinary summons of the Baptist in view of a still more extraordinary fact, "Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." And secondly, it was his own consistent, truthful and fearless character. He called into life the inanimate and well-nigh buried hopes of men, in regard to a Promised Saviour. He woke up their slumbering consciences. He appealed to well-grounded fears of a want of preparation to meet Christ. His stern reproofs and his severe denunciations awakened a corresponding echo in their breasts, for they felt the force of them; and they were "baptized of him in the Jordan, confessing their sins."

The effect which the great Forerunner produced upon his countrymen was so striking, that long after the appearance of Jesus, and in spite of the most faithful pointings to the Law of God, they clung with

few exceptions to his side, and some of them kept up a separate school from the Christian for generations later. The explanation is not difficult; for, disappointed at first sight with the humble life and carriage of Christ, and hindered by their prejudices, or the prejudices of their rulers—the priests—from resorting to His company, and so, candidly listening to His words and honestly considering His works, they rested content with St. John; in whose lessons of wisdom they found the response they craved to their moral and spiritual wants.

Any teacher, my brethren, who addresses himself with fidelity to the better nature of man, and gives to him food for it or consolation, is sure to be valued. Our deepest and most lasting needs are not always matters of sensibility. They are known of or suspected, rather than felt; but when evoked — and hardly any man is willing to have them, so long as they exist, left wholly unperceived by him, and therefore he approaches, if he does not invite the monitor—I say, *when evoked*, they surround him, who satisfies them with the arms of an eager and grateful embrace. The righteous, who "smites us friendly and reproves us," and not the flatterer who deceives, or the mistaken companion who fears to awaken our displeasure, gets a permanent hold upon our regard. He who comes to us with Divine light

in the darkness, and guides our bewildered or sorrowful steps to some fountain of comfort, is endeared before all others.

We cherish the memory of our mothers. The image of her by whose side we nestled in childhood, and under whose gentle eye we grew up to our riper years, is enshrined in our inmost heart. Is the question asked why? Is it for the attractions of her outward person, or the pleasant surroundings of her earthly lot? Is it for accomplishments of genius, or refinements of taste she may have happened to possess? Is it for unchiding license of our folly, and a studious ministry to our appetite, that no gratification should be wanting at any time to make our lives pass agreeably away? Is it not rather, for that discreet restraint, that tender monition, that forbearing, yet watchful oversight, that ennobling example and that wholesome instruction which has been the instrument, under God, of implanting in us His fear and forming us to habits of virtue and piety?

The impressions that grow most sacred with our years are those of a moral and religious description. When the glitter of princes shall have ceased to dazzle, and the fame of scholars and artists to elicit our homage, then men and women, beloved, who have made us better by their influence will be the stars in our firmament. We shall break the

statues to pieces of those who have led us astray. Others we shall let fall from their niches who have been mere negatives of good, or take little interest in crowning them for earthly distinctions. But we shall lift up to the highest pedestals the sacred forms of others, who have knit between us and them imperishable bonds, by awakening us to a sense of our immortal interests, and leading us to duty and the Cross. Yes, for the reason, that spiritual necessity, when felt, is the most profound that a man can experience; and that its proper satisfaction is elevating and harmonizing to his entire nature, while the loss of it leaves him without God or hope; an unrestful thing, a disorderly creature; a stranger to the destiny it is his to realize—for this reason, so sufficient, every thoughtful person, the more he reflects and the longer he lives, will prize most the friends who have been *forerunners* in his way to conduct him to his portion in his Saviour.

And this will be the explanation of those superior ties which will connect holy beings one with another forever, while the mere affections of time will lose their power. There must be a moral and immortal element in all heavenly love.

Now the filling of human want by Himself and His provisions gave the principal occasion of welcome to our Lord Jesus Christ, and it is this, which in every

age, has made His advent so joyful. But this statement of the fact by no means expresses the whole truth upon the subject. The *sufficiency of Jesus Christ* to answer to every need and yearning of the human heart, has been in the past, and always will be in the future, the *chiefest ground of persuasion*, on the part of His followers, that He is the Messiah, the Redeemer who was to come.

Outstripping arguments from any and every source, better than all the demonstrations of history and logic, is this full and adequate response to all the cravings of humanity which the Church experiences in her Lord and Saviour. This is the foundation upon which she reposes with unquestioning confidence. She is content with this proof. Challenge her humblest member, in the simplicity of his faith, and though you may perplex him with reasoning, and assail him with objections which he has not the skill or the learning effectually to resist, you cannot shake him in his belief; unless you succeed—a task generally quite hopeless in the case of an earnest and devout believer—in leading him to think that his soul's wants are fancies, and that his communions with Jesus in closet and in Church are delusive dreams. Venture to tell him so—that they are fancies and dreams—after he has knelt in sorrow upon his knees, or when he has gratefully lifted up his song in acknow-

ledgment of the comfort and peace that have been breathed into him by his Lord, and encounter, if you will, the energy or the calmness of his look of reproach.

The truth is, the best-furnished disciple, planted in the very heart of the citadel, with the high walls and ramparts and outworks round about him, of all the accumulated evidences by which Christianity is established, relies far less upon these for his own satisfaction, than upon the wholly interior witness of his hidden life. He has not been unmindful of the former in examining the question of Christianity, nor is he indifferent to their importance in fortifying its claims against the arguments of doubters and opponents. He directs their attention to such proofs because they are, in the first instance, the only appreciable ones of a supernatural religion.

The evidence from prophesy, from miracles, from the internal contents of Revelation, from the lives and characters of its writers, and from the acceptance of these writings, in a day when they were capable of being sifted—by qualified witnesses and by the whole believing Church—is a sort of demonstration that all men can appreciate. The foundation-stones of the Christian Faith are found herein, and they are of unspeakable value. They are the buttresses to its building, the protecting towers to its fortress.

The intelligent disciple, acting in the spirit of the Psalmist's direction, "walks about Zion and goes round about her, tells the towers thereof, marks well their bulwarks and considers her palaces, that he may tell it to the generation following."

But after all, as it is said by a holy Apostle, "he that *believeth on* the Son of God hath the witness in *himself*." The impartation of the Spirit to his soul, and the effect upon his heart and life of the regenerating grace and enlightening word of his Saviour, are an irrefragable testimony to His Truth. They put the seal to all other testimonies in favor of the gospel. He can say in the light of his experiences, "*I know* in whom I have believed." Like the cured blind man, who was asked the process by which his sight had been recovered, he cannot explain that, but of this he is confident, that "whereas he was blind, now he sees," and he is ready to confess to his Restorer that *He* is "the Son of God."

The adaptation, dear brethren, of Christianity to man, or the satisfaction it affords to the needs of his suffering and longing humanity, is the argument of arguments for the Divinity of its Author. "And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God, we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord, we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation."

I wish you now to go back with me to the days of the Incarnation, and see how He, who was "the Word made flesh," was first received. The faithful Forerunner of his Lord was a prisoner at Machænes. A doubt perhaps had crept over his mind, prematurely cut off, as it seemed to him, from the exercise of his ministry, and shut up in the solitude of a distant castle. Or more probably, this doubt was felt by his disciples, who were too anxious to remain his adherents, when they should have left him for the side of Christ. He calls two of their number to him, and sends them from his lonely quarters on the Eastern bank of the Dead Sea basin, to make a certain inquiry of the Blessed Messiah. "Art thou He that should come? or do we look for another?" At the time of their arrival, our Saviour was engaged in the performance of many acts of mercy; and He replied to the question of His visitors, "Go, show John again what things ye do see and hear; the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached unto them."

Miracles! you exclaim, and these the solitary credentials of His mission! Yes, but notice two points in connection with them; first, they are intended for witnesses to one who has never yet

known the *grace* of Jesus. John Baptist was a prophet; and though more than a prophet, he that is least in the Church of the Saviour is greater than he. And again, they are not mere miracles; but acts of distinguished beneficence; restoration of a poor, suffering and decrepit humanity to soundness and peace—the very acts I should have expected of the Redeemer of mankind.

When the feet of the lame were seen to leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb to sing, when the blind man beheld visions and the deaf heard sounds of music, and when upon ears, unused to intelligence, as in the crazed victim of an evil possession, or unaccustomed to gladness, as in the poor and neglected, there fell the gracious words from the Saviour's lips which made all men wonder, who could help at such an hour acknowledging in Him, the Son of the Living God, the Deliverer from all evil and the Prophet of Consolation? Was not He the Expectation of the world, the Desire of all nations, who had been looked for from the beginning? Could not His people very fittingly say, "Lo, this is our God, we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord, we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation"?

Come now with me forward to times subsequent to the day of the Apostles—earlier or later—and ask

yourselves the origin of that profound impression which the religion of the Gospel has made upon all classes, wise and unwise, wherever the Church of Christ has taken root. Though to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, it has proved the power of God and the wisdom of God unto all that have believed its message. Upon states, civilizations, laws, letters and arts, upon leaders in opinion as well as uncultured multitudes it has stamped its impress. Take its light, its beneficence, its equity and purity from the society of Christian lands, and what a void would be left! Judge of its truth and authority, by the effects of its institutions and teachings. Or lest this should seem to you too wide a survey, narrow down your view to what you can observe with your own eyes in your intercourse with others and in communion with yourselves.

For instance, you see some gay and thoughtless companion effectually converted from a life of folly to one of earnest purpose and the fear of God. The change in his tastes, his principles, his motives and his habits is decided. You feel his influence in an opposite direction from that in which he has been wont to draw you before. Or you remark in some Christian friend who has feared the Lord from his youth, the consistency of his walk, and the obvious interest he exhibits in the services of religion

and doing good in the world. You cannot, after observations like these, harbor the question of infidelity, touching the genuineness of Christianity, or the obligation to accept it.

You visit some cottage of the pious poor or some bedside of an afflicted saint. Silver and gold have they none: but such as the Church in her privileges and promises has to give, they enjoy at her hand. In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, they are comfortable and happy.

Without provision for the morrow they look trustfully up to their Father in Heaven, and say, "Give us day by day our daily bread," and rest content with their lot. No miracle of healing is wrought upon their palsied limbs or their aching bones. Slow martyrs to suffering they live on year by year. Into their lustrous eyes enters no light from without, and no finger divine is put into the sealed chambers of their organs of hearing to open them; but yet spiritual illumination is theirs, and their ears are unclosed to celestial melody; and as they are partakers of the suffering so also are they partakers of the consolation in Christ, and their weakness and endurance and anguish are made the occasion of a special revelation of their Heavenly Parent, to whom they "sing songs in the night."

The angel of death draws near to them; and that

last solemn darkness closes its curtain around them, which no beam penetrates save that which issues from the Throne of God; but into it they enter without fear, and commit the keeping of their souls to Jesus in the confidence of a blissful resurrection.

Do you not feel, in the presence of scenes like these, a conviction of the reality of the religion of the Gospel, which no study of mere evidence could produce, nor sceptical suggestion unsettle?

You are yourselves, we will suppose, in need of its help. Dissatisfied with the world, ill at ease in its enjoyments, conscious of higher capacities and loftier destinies than a mere creature of time, burdened with a sense of guilt, pierced by the arrows of conscience, God's countenance darkened, Heaven distant and the future uncertain, you catch the audible whisper of those words of promise which no human being ever dared to utter, "Come unto me, ye weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Revealed to your troubled eyes, is your first clear discovery of the Son of God coming into the world to save you. Incarnate,—girt about with human conditions, touched with a feeling of all human infirmities, a Friend, a Benefactor, a Consoler through all His lifetime, and at length a Sacrifice for your sins, and the destruction of death and hell for your reprieve,—you begin to perceive

His love. You respond to His exhibition of affection by venturing to put your trust in Him. You appropriate the saying of the humble Paul, the apostle, and make it your own, "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief."

You take up the record of His ministry and passion, and such is the wealth of its demonstrations, through teaching to guide you, through example to attract you, and through grace to assist you, that you renew at every step the outburst of your conviction,—"My Lord and my God!" You are confident that no other than a superhuman portion is opened in Jesus. No man, no teacher but from God, no being but the Only Begotten of the Father full of grace and truth, could thus enlighten and deliver you, and fill you with such peace in believing. And in no service, short of that of a Divine communion and appointment, could all the aspirations of your soul be met, with all its capacities for enjoyment and improvement, as they are in Jesus Christ. Are you not ready then, let me ask, to join in the acknowledgment, "Lo, this is our God, we have waited for Him, and He will save us? This is the Lord, we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation"?

Can infidel criticism dislodge such a Faith? Can a conviction like this need a constant bolstering up

with the evidences of the Christian Religion? I affirm that no evidence is equal in authority to that which the full and complete provision of the Gospel furnishes in answer to the necessities of the individual soul.

Herein is the "Feast of fat things," which prophecy announces shall be made in "the mountain" of the Church of God for all people. Preparatory to this Feast, or as forming a part of it, two steps had to be taken. The Scripture foretold them. They were first, the removal of the covering cast over all people, and of the vail that is spread over all nations, and secondly the swallowing up of death in victory. The former is tantamount to the preaching of the Gospel to every creature, and the latter is the gift of Immortality. Christ gave the Gospel. The word of Revelation went out from Himself, and by His command, into all the earth. It has everywhere scattered light because it is light, and the vail has been taken away from the understandings of men that they might see this heaven-descended Truth. And it has everywhere been embraced and welcomed, wherever its messages have been heard—and why? Because of its Divine sufficiency for human requirement. Not the preaching of it, as such, has given it diffusion;—not the bearing of it by Apostles and evangelists to the heathen has made it effectual to human accept-

ancy—but its appropriateness, its answering supply to a people in the posture of waiting and desire.

Hence the Christian duty of extending it still farther. If "waiting" have ceased through discouragement, or "desire" have failed through the furnishing of miserable substitutes for the true, let the messengers of the Lord be sent to renew them to men's hearing.

Suppose you yourselves were living in destitute places. The minister of Christ and the steward of the mysteries of God never visits you. No warning of Advent, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord," salutes your ears, once familiar with the sound. The spiritual silence of the wilderness is unbroken by the voice of the messenger. Christmas comes and goes, the Christian year enters in and departs, without your ever hearing of Jesus and the Great Redeemer. There is no worship that you value, no sacrament, no Word of Life; your children are unbaptized, and your dead are committed to the silent earth without Christian burial. Would you not appreciate in such circumstances the grateful sentiment once put into the mouth of God's ancient people, when they saw approaching His ministers? "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of them that bring glad tidings!"

Or suppose, dear brethren, what is more likely to have been your experience, or may possibly be your lot before you die, that your surrounding

was one of dangerous temptation; the world of fashion, or the world of ambition and gain besetting you; evil companions at your side; excitable passions within, and weaknesses of nature and habit brought on by past folly, making you their easy victims. Suppose in such a condition that there were no Christianity in the community about you—no church, no means of grace, no good example; no light of religion by the fireside, and no Christian woman in the home of your affections. The scene and the circumstances are suddenly changed! Christianity makes its appearance. The Church and its provisions of blessing are set up. The society of the pure, the consistent and the true, and the sanctity of home, and the checks of example and oversight are enjoyed. The word of the Gospel is in the ear, and the helps of the Spirit in answer to prayer are on the heart and life. Would not a thoughtful and observant man exclaim in such a case, "Behold the Lord is in this place," "Lo this is our God, we have waited for Him, and He will save us." There are three ways in which God makes Himself manifest as a present power in the world. First, by the instruction and comfort of the Scriptures, second, by the appointment of His ministry to turn the hearts of the disobedient unto wisdom, and third, by coming among us in the person of His Holy Spirit, and with great might succoring us.

SERMON II.

THE UPWARD DIRECTION OF A TRUE LIFE.

"*The way of life is above to the wise.*"—PROVERBS XV. 24.

THE question has been asked by a writer of no mean ability in our own day, "Is life worth living?' and asked, not so much with a view to an answer, as for the utterance of his protest against a skeptical philosophy that knows no life but this. Is it worth while to live with one's aims and achievements bounded by time? Is this the life to which real value attaches, whose principal motive to exertion is the promotion of those harmonious adjustments of things which no GOD watches over, and in whose disturbance there is neither shelter nor comfort?

Inquiry in regard to the worth of life is nothing new in the world. It was asked by Job in the day of the patriarchs. The author of the Book of Ecclesiastes pressed it upon his contemporaries, though not in so many words, nor from a speculative point of sight. He was prompted to utter it after having looked at the

troubles and vexations of earth, the inequalities of its lot, the temptations men encounter through which it is so difficult to pass unharmed, and the many non-fulfillments of the fair morning of promise.

I should do injustice to my feelings, as well as to the occasion which has brought us together, were I to indulge upon this theme in a despondent mood. It would be foreign to the spirit of the Scripture, to which your attention is invited, to speak in the presence of these young candidates for life otherwise than hopefully in respect to its outlook. The key to true wisdom and success in its use is put into our hands by Solomon:

"The way of life is above to the wise."

Its upward direction is the secret of escape from its perplexities. A brave heart and resolute will, coupled with unwavering faith in God, lifts it to a plane superior to the storm which agitates the world and out of the reach of the clouds that darken one's vision. The satisfactory solution of the problem, whether it be worth while to live, is found in that Higher Life, which is the only fulfillment of the great end of being, and its sole preservative from the pitfall that sometimes opens at our feet.

Let me bring before you a few thoughts, this morning, upon this upward direction which a true life takes, and in which its dignity consists.

I. Consider then, in the first place, that such upward direction appears in the attempt to rise to the full stature of Manhood. The object of life, we are told by both Science and Religion, is to unfold the capacities of the creature, and qualify it for that state or relation to which it has pleased God to call it. Now life makes its appearance in the little egg or cell which it organizes for its home; and from that humble starting-point develops all the parts and proportions of whatever order of being is wrapped up in the tiny germ. From the grade of a mollusk to that of Man, through the several intermediate steps of a continually ascending series, it follows out the process of unfolding to the end. The reptile and the fish, the bird and the quadruped, thus gradually come to their perfection. Each realizes, as a rule, what was intended for it by Nature. The brilliant coloring of an oriole lacks not for beauty, and the intelligent skill of a beaver is not wanting in wisdom for any defect in this matter of growth. No later art or training can add to the furnishing of either.

Certain orders of animals are improvable under the hand of Man, never without him: but Man himself rises by his personal efforts and by the aid of society to a loftiness of development, which unassisted Nature can never attain to. The item of self-help is always a distinguishing feature in the evolution of Humanity.

Well then; Man commences his career with the care of his body. He finds its organism complete, independently of him, but the education of its powers and the discipline of its propensities demand his earnest attention. A sound body is the only fitting receptacle of a sound mind. The intellectual worker knows the importance of health, and the spiritual believer the need of an instrument kept properly in tune. The appetities and passions that locate chiefly in the flesh will most seriously interfere with any considerable improvement of mind or heart, if the body be left without its salutary training.

A certain amount of vitality every man possesses, in regard to whose expenditure he must choose the way. He cannot waste it in animal indulgence, and yet command it for a superior flight. There is an exhaustion of power in the intensity of each.

Besides, it must be said that the physical propensities of nature open up that pitfall to which I have alluded, and to which something corresponding is spoken of in the Scripture: "The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath." This is the full statement of Solomon in the proverb, the original for "hell" being "sheol." Need I observe, that the sensualist digs for himself an open and yawning grave right in the path before him? That the intoxicating cup and the imbruting lust drop him

into a gulf of present misery, just here and now, and not only in the remote hereafter? That the bitter self-reproach and compunctious visiting of that awful fall are far more intolerable to the victim of it than any taste of the wormwood and the gall, which can be pressed to his lips by the humiliation of defeat or the pang of disappointment? That this is indeed the depth, that knows a lower depth beneath it?

Can it be avoided in any way? Yes, by a timely "keeping under the body and bringing it into subjection;" and by so healthfully exercising all its members and faculties, that they shall work obedient to law and harmonious with the will of God.

For this body is the temple of the Holy Ghost. Its eyes are the luminaries, its hands are the co-workers, and its feet are the messengers of that immortal part which rightfully governs them. It is therefore deserving of a particular care, and accordingly as the foundation is surely laid, the wiser and happier will be the attempt to erect thereon the rising edifice.

But we dismiss the claims of our physical nature as we mount a step higher into an intellectual realm. I wish I had time to enlarge upon the privilege of thought, upon the satisfaction attendant on a state of intelligence, and the enjoyment which comes from cultivated tastes that equally refine their possessor and beautify the objects he touches. I wish I could even

allude to the various studies and achievements that elevate the mind of the scholar who heartily pursues them: or refer, as one would, to those far-reaching discoveries and profound insights into Nature, and those broad sweeps over history, literature and art, which generate a disrelish for mere sensuous pleasure and a comparative indifference to loss or gain, as the world understands them.

We talk of putting this world down under our feet. It is the effort of Religion to do so, and Religion should succeed. But there is a power beneath that of Religion, in the devotion of the student to his labors and of the man of genius to his creations, that might sometimes teach the Christian half the secret of conquest, which is enthusiasm. When a leading scientist of our times, alas! now no more, was once entreated by his friends to apply for pecuniary emolument at the hand of France, by way of filling a too scanty purse, he resented the proposal. "What? Leave the glaciers of the Alps to pay court at Paris? Exchange the researches that I prize for the gold and the silver that I do not value?" The suggestion was painful. It was mortifying to his self-respect. And tradition tells us of a painter in Rome, who, when the imperial city was sacked by the Goths, so lost himself to a sense of impending ruin in his absorption in his canvas, that the rude soldiers actually found him at his

easel, intent and calm and peaceful, as they broke into his studio to rifle it. What do these incidents illustrate, but the power of a high order of cultivation to raise one to a condition above the common level of human experiences? They show what a resource mental furnishing is, what a delight there is in science, what a solace in art.

But ascend still farther. There is a department of our nature, which includes in itself our moral endowments, and comes nearest to the summit of Perfect Manhood. The virtues that constitute character excel gifts of the mind as intellect excels the body. The traits of uprightness, integrity, honor, fortitude, purity, truth and love are crowning attributes of Humanity, and when united with intelligence are loftier than genius and mightier than talent. The moral grandeur of principle, even the moral loveliness of charity, throws every other ground of distinction into the shade. Rectitude of life overawes the observer—charity wins by the beauty of its picture.

Said the elder Horace Binney to the preacher only a few months before he died, "The longer I live, the more am I impressed with the incomparable power of Goodness. The person, who can draw his fellow-creatures after him, by their confidence in his sympathy and their trust in the unselfishness of his character and conduct, is more to be envied than ruler or sage.

His is the position that neither the sword nor the pen can purchase. It is the unbought pre-eminence, that commands the homage of the world. Invaluable testimony! and particularly striking, as it seems to me, for coming from a man who had lived in an almost sublime seclusion above society around him, eminently a man of intellect and learning, and conspicuous for fame. It was the result of his mature reflections in a magnificent old age.

Did I remark just now that a painter was once found in Rome, who was beguiled of the thought of its desolation by the attraction of his canvas? Let me tell you that a greater than the painter was there; even the chief of the western Fathers, St. Augustine of Hippo; who sat down by the melancholy spectacle, or looked across the waters of the Mediterranean Sea to survey the ruins, and then wrote his immortal work upon the "City of God:" and the most impressive lessons which he drew for his own and the Church's comfort in that remarkable production were suggested by the magnitude of the Fall of the Capital, in contrast with the Imperishability of the Kingdom of Christ. Out of the very midst of the ravages of time spring the monuments that are to last forever. Men recount their struggles and defeats, their disappointments, sorrows and sufferings, as reasons for not wishing to continue in life and as arguments for dis-

paraging the privilege. Let me ask, in all plainness, what would human life be worth without its trials? Where would be its heroes, or saints, or martyrs? Where the rare models of greatness now extolled, were there no discouragements to produce them? Is not high courage indebted to peril for the theatre of its display? Is not sublime patience evoked by hardship? If the blows that fall on principle were not like those of the hammer on the anvil, would it ever be admirable? What would become of the heroism of the soldier or the magnanimous sacrifice of the brother or sister of mercy, or the unshaken fortitude and serene elevation of the confessor for Christ, were there no battles to be fought, no plague-striken districts or instruments of torture to be met with?

The life truly worth living is often the fruit of the adversities that provoke the question of its value to the lips of the unfortunate. The Higher Life, as I have said, solves the grave problem of existence. The life that mounts up to the full capacity of Manhood is the proper illustration of its excellence. "The way of life is above to the wise."

II. But the dignity or Upward Direction of this kind of a career is seen, in the second place, in its taking hold on Life in God, "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine Nature."

It is a very obvious remark, that if the development in Man of those gifts which distinguish him were to come about as normally as the revelation of its instincts comes to an animal, there would be no danger of the unfolding of his faculties, free will notwithstanding, in any other than an orderly and harmonious fashion. For that will being sound, his reason would be regulative and his appetites subservient, and a conscience void of offence would always support him. But what do we witness? Derangement and conflict. The power that should govern is unable to control in that it is weak through the flesh.

The progressive uplift and discipline of Humanity in the course of many centuries has not brought it up to that stage of improvement, in which principle is master and pleasure is servant. Some lessons have been learned by the more favored races of mankind in a lofty morality. Some attainments have been made in intellectual and æsthetic culture; and some heirlooms to be handed down to posterity have been bequeathed to the living in the shape of rare productions of human genius. But in respect to the recovery of the world from sin—to a prevailing reign of equity, purity and charity, with inward light and peace—no advance has been perceptible in any quarter whatever, except where the Religion of Revelation has lent its supernatural assistance.

The whole history of spiritual advancement in the world has been remedial in its character. A sort of materia medica has been introduced into ethics. Man has been treated as a patient, diseased, disordered, disabled. The ministration to his benefit has been one of cure for malady, and of restoration of lost power. The miracles of Jesus are illustrative. Blinded eyes have had to be opened, ears that were deaf to be unstopped, organs destitute of speech to be helped to utterance, feet without ability to move to be endued with strength; and souls, in like manner, that were held captive in chains, to be set at liberty from their bonds that they might serve God.

What is wanted, and has been wanted all along, is not simply the touch of the Restorer, or skill of the Physician, but a renewal of life from its fountain; a fresh communication from its Source in God to renovate Humanity throughout; a direct inspiration of that original breath, which was breathed into man in its purity and energy, when he first "became a living soul." And this want has been met in the mystery of the Incarnation. Life, that was embodied in the person of Adam and through him imparted to his race, was renewed in the Person of the Son of the Blessed—but after a higher order—and through Him is dispensed to His Church.

The life that was, and still is in Jesus, is the Life of

God. It is a stream issuing forth from the hidden "Well of Life" in the bosom of the Infinite. "As the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself."

We receive of this life by a new birth "from above." The life which we derive from Adam is "of the earth, earthy," but that which we derive from Jesus is the Life "of the Lord from Heaven." We nurture it continually from its supernal spring, by spiritually and sacramentally eating of that living bread which came down from Heaven, to give life unto the world.

It unites itself, therefore, with our inferior Humanity, to recuperate its losses and to harmonize and elevate its powers. Humanity under it becomes capable of that advancement to the perfect stature of Manhood which I have tried to depict, and which, in the absence of grace, is an impossible attainment.

It showed itself forth in its transcendent excellence in the example of our Saviour. Under that marvellously inviting picture, aided by the influences of the "quickening Spirit" which went forth constantly from the bosom of Jesus to human souls, sinners were converted—and daily are still converted—and transformed into faithful disciples. By its manifestation of love upon the Cross, and above all by the efficacy of its atoning sacrifice, it has drawn irresis-

tibly to the service of God, and has kindled morality into an emotion and the practice of duty into a choice.

This Life in Jesus, entering into His followers and stimulating their faith to lay hold of the promises which are set before them, enables them in turn to overcome the world.

This Life is their Light. It was luminous in Himself, throwing its radiance around Him through all He said and did. It shed a glory over questions of accountability, destiny, Divine character, forgiveness, and the privilege of prayer, which is only equalled by the gift of spiritual perception to discern them. It becomes an inward illumination to every humble recipient who has grace to sit at the feet of the Master and to learn of Him. There are mysteries of Truth that are beyond the power of Reason to explore. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit." Humility, that accepts the testimony of Him who spake what He did know, finds not only its understanding opened that it may understand the Scriptures, but comprehends also what is meant by the expression, "the light of life."

"There is a path which no fowl knoweth,
And which the vulture's eye hath not seen."
It is the path to Wisdom.
But "where shall wisdom be found?
And where is the place of understanding?
It is not found in the land of the living.
The depth saith, 'It is not in me.'
And the sea saith, 'It is not in me.'
Destruction and death say, 'We have heard the fame thereof with our ears.'
But God knoweth the way thereof,
And He knoweth the place thereof:
And unto man He saith,
Behold the fear of the Lord, that is Wisdom,
And to depart from evil, is understanding."

III. I think I have thus shown the Upward Direction which a True Life takes, first by its rising to the full stature of Manhood, and secondly, by its participation in the Life of God. Let us now contemplate one farther step in its sublime ascent, as it opens into Immortality.

I cannot look forward with diffidence, even from the premises which the Positive Philosopher accepts, in respect to the reality of a Future State. It is one of the tenets of his system that life is for the unfolding of the capacities of the creature: but while, as I have shown, all other orders are developed in the time allotted them, it is impossible that Man should attain to his perfection in threescore years and ten. The capabilities wrapped up in every human being are

unlimited, in comparison with those of the brute. His intellectual wealth, his moral endowments and aspirations, the profound depth of his affections, the scope of his inquiries, and the possible achievements of his hands can never be measured within the limits of his mortal career. Not a man or woman dies, in whom power unevoked does not far exceed the power which is brought into use.

The majority of the race die strangers to what they have. Death comes prematurely very often. A great man's life is frequently cut off at the height of its promise. Brilliant genius is quenched long before it has attained to its meridian splendor. The gentle breast of the mother is pierced by the dread destroyer's arrow, just when it is flowing fullest of tenderness. And the devout soul of the saint, even while the world is looking on to admire the addition of new graces and virtues to a character already lustrous, is hastily withdrawn, to the sore detriment of society and the lament of the Church.

Can it be said in such cases that the object of life has been attained, and its course fully run? Not to its possessor, at least, unless the life that now is be allowed to be the stepping stone to a longer hereafter.

The Positivist would console us by the thought, that lives, however imperfect to those who have led them, are more truly satisfactory, if worthily im-

proved, than any other kind of life can be to the living; and that they have answered their purpose by making better the spectator, and by contributing to the stock of common advantage for survivors. The Positivist's Heaven is the advancement of Humanity. Individuals may drop out and perish by the way; but mankind as a whole is set forward—and this, in his opinion, is sufficient. His own future of enjoyment he anticipates in the Future of posterity, that will be profited by his precedence, though he pass himself into a state of unconsciousness when his place is taken by another.

There is an element of satisfaction in this view of the matter. The Christian, like the Positivist, takes pleasure in contemplating the onward movement of the world. He is as glad to have done his part, in transmitting to his children a pure name and blood, and is as content to retire, if so be his fellow-creatures shall derive benefit hereafter from his having lived and wrought before them. As he is a debtor to the past for a more advanced position in the march of civilization than he would otherwise have enjoyed, so he would repay this debt by abetting the progress of the future.

And yet, he superadds to this pleasing prospect a vision of Faith. He sees not only the perpetuation of his life in those who succeed him, but he beholds

both himself and them in another state of existence. Do you ask, By what warrant? By the warrant of a Revelation, I might answer; but I will not avail of that just here. I will put the Christian on the same platform for a moment with the disciple of Science, and let him reason exclusively from scientific grounds.

Science teaches him to believe that spirit never perishes. Matter, the outgrowth of spirit, is shadow —spirit is substance. Organism can be resolved again into the essence from which it sprang, but the potentialities will remain, that were inherent in that essence before it was shaped. The magnetic and electric forces that flash in the lightning or quiver and vibrate in a northern aurora do not cease to exist, when they are withdrawn from sight. The life of the grasses and the trees, where is it when it retires in the autumn? What has become of it in the winter of its abeyance? It is about the roots, very plainly, and it holds still in possession the re-animating principle, with which it will renew their verdure in the spring. Is it not altogether an unaltered thing?

Human life, which is an expression of the grandest type of life, goes away in death from the perishable tabernacle of the body, with which one day it will unite itself again. "The dust shall return to the dust as it was, and the spirit unto God who gave it." Like the Great Father of Spirits, it will dwell in secret for

awhile, but like Him it may abound in conscious energy and enjoyment, when least manifest to the world through acts that reveal it. It is not absorbed into Himself, though taken back to His keeping, nor is it suspended in fruition. The powers that were unfolded in time were first enfolded in its being, and as they could be *e*-volved, so they can be *in*-volved again.

The day will come for a modified restoration of the once animated flesh in which the spirit was clothed. And what shall hinder the potent principle of life from reorganizing afresh the material germ, preserved somewhere for it; out of which it may weave the beautiful garment of the body—only ethereal in make—just as the life-power in the grub weaves a silky covering about itself, and works into the exquisite texture of the robe, in which it will eventually take its flight, threads of gold and silver and of colors of precious stones.

Do you object that this reasoning from Nature is probable, and not certain? I admit it. Its value consists in the fact that Revelation falls in with it and confirms it. The only reliable disclosure of a state of Immortality is the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which makes it clear beyond a doubt that life present is not the whole of it, nor is it merely for time that its gift is bestowed.

"The way of life is above to the wise," that he may depart from the cold grave and "hell beneath."

"I am the Resurrection and the Life, saith the Lord. He that believeth in ME, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in ME shall never die." Because the Redeemer lives, His disciples who are members of Himself must live also. They cannot be holden of the grave, for they carry in themselves the seed of an immortal existence.

I ask you now, in view of the intrinsic dignity of Man, his rising to a participation in the Life of God and entering eventually upon an imperishable being, if you can seriously doubt any longer whether it be worth while to live.

In addressing myself to those who are on the point of entering into life's busy scenes, let me say in conclusion:

Be true men and strong, and of a good courage. Be positive powers in society as men of thought and character. Be yourselves the heroes that you admire, by converting the hard experiences of earth into training-steps to fortitude and valor, and its more tender griefs into helps to gentle sympathy. Be Christians. Be sacramentally united to your Head in His visible Church, and in the exercise of an earnest faith. Reverence the Word of Revelation. Aspire to be wise, welcome truth from whatever quarter it comes, study God's works in all the phenomena of matter and

spirit,—but never forget that there are altitudes to which only the wings of Faith can bear you. Pause with humility at all times as you enter upon the threshold of "the deep things of God."

There is nothing so in love with light as Light itself. True Religion and Learning are as sisters. The Church early took into her keeping the foremost civilizations of the world. To letters and arts and sciences she gave a Christian impress. Her clergy have been eminent among the founders of academies and universities. No "fellowships" can eschew their occupancy, on the ground of any supposed indifference to intellectual progress. Yet God be thanked, that laymen have been raised up to share conspicuously in the studies which were once almost exclusively confined to them. Whatever your profession in life, be yours the acknowledgment of the Psalmist,

> "With Thee is the Well of Life,
> And in Thy Light shall we see light."

I want you also to remember, that though you anticipate Heaven, it is not the object of that forecasting to make you indifferent to earth. To live, as if there, is prospective good—to live, as if here, is immediate duty. Heavenly-mindedness is a temper to be brought to bear upon the present to increase its earnestness in what remains to be done. Our Saviour turned not

His back upon His disciples even when He left them. He withdrew from their society in the very act of benediction, and receded, as it were, to the Kingdom of Glory. Be imitators of Him until you yourselves are removed.

As my eye has rested on one feature after another of this imposing edifice, in which the memory of your Founder is enshrined, I have seemed to see an enforcement of my teaching.

I recall an interview with him, some eighteen or nineteen years ago, which has left upon my mind a very distinct impression, though my memory retains nothing of our conversation at the time beyond the subject of it. We talked, I recollect, of the stewardship of life. It was at the close of a quiet Sunday, at his own home at Mauch Chunk. The shadows of evening were gathering about us, but not so thickly as to obscure the expression on his grave and thoughtful face. He appeared to be brooding over the great and good things which he subsequently undertook with characteristic zeal. He had been from his youth a hard-working man, and had risen slowly to the measure of a noble manhood, imbued with the fear of God and a laudable interest in the welfare of his fellow-men.

Four years, perhaps, after that evening, he laid the foundations of this promising University. Before

finishing this structure in which we worship to-day, he joined generously with his pastor in the erection of a Church at Mauch Chunk, which is another monument to his worth. In Lehigh University, however, the work of his life was consummated. In the completion of this costly edifice, and of the solid Memorial Library by its side, and in the projection of a Christian Hospital not far away, he united his last services for sound learning and liberal education with the sweet charities of the Gospel.

May this imposing cluster—for cluster I may properly call it, even to the inclusion of St. Luke's beyond the hill—be a standing representative to long coming time of the ever-upward direction of your Founder's life, and a daily stimulus to yourselves, brethren and friends, to like dignity of aim and achievement.

[This Sermon was preached in the Chapel of Lehigh University, on Sunday in Anniversary Week, June 19, 1881.]

SERMON III.

UNQUESTIONING OBEDIENCE.

"*Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it.*"—ST. JOHN II. 5.

LEARNING how to obey, because second in importance to no other attainment we make, is the first and the last lesson of childhood. It is the groundwork of all true and thorough education; for if confidence in a wisdom superior to ours is not early acquired there is no advance toward knowledge, neither in the want of a habit of submission is there gain or safety. Our judgment must be taught to yield to direction on account of its deficiencies, and our irregular will to a higher law. We sustain relations even in childhood which require for the peace of our little society some presiding power to restrain our own selfishness and maintain our rights. We enter, even in our earliest years, into those natural or voluntary combinations which demand a head, by which all the members of the narrow circle must be governed in order to any unity of interest or oneness of effort.

Childhood, with its consciousness of weakness, ignorance and want, is peculiarly fitted to receive this instruction, and its happy surroundings by those who love and cherish it form an admirable school for its training.

But rightly regarded, and in reference to attainments as well as ties of a more lasting description, is not the whole of life a kind of childhood? Are we not always dependent for intelligence upon a Wisdom higher than ours, and is there not always an Authority which demands our homage, both for our individual happiness, and for the collective good, not to say for the service of our Maker, as long as we stand in any relation to Him?

Before answering such questions, let us turn for a moment to the memorable incident in connection with which the Blessed Mother of our Lord gave command to the servants to obey His behest. A marriage feast in an oriental country commonly lasts for several days. At the wedding banquet in Cana to which Jesus with His disciples was asked, the wine gave out while He was yet present. In consequence, perhaps, of unexpected guests, or the too generous hospitality of the humble household, the provision made for their entertainment was failing before its time. This is the meaning of the words, "When they wanted wine." They point to the moment when the wine bottles were

being drained and there would shortly be need of more.

The Mother of Jesus, who would appear from this circumstance and from her address to the servants to have been intimate in the family, gently apprised our Saviour of the unhappy deficiency. It was the resort of an interested friend for counsel or aid to one in whose help she had reason to be confident. Our Saviour, rising to a higher level than human, being about of His own motion to improve the occasion for a revelation of His Divinity, put His mother temporarily at a distance. He addresses her in a way to impress the fact of their great disparity upon her mind. He does not call her Mother, but "Woman," only a respectful and not unaffectionate title, but one which defined her kind and assigned her her place among those of human birth. It was the same title he gave to the Blessed Virgin upon the Cross. On no one occasion in the course of His Ministry, is it recorded of Him, that He called her Mother; and this is a significant fact, not without its bearing upon subsequent errors in theology.

"Woman, what have I to do with thee?" What in common is there betwixt us in the interposition of My Divine power? "Mine hour" for action "is not yet come." The true and humble Virgin was properly affected by this reproof. She was not discouraged by

the answer, but on the contrary more assured than before of His timely and efficient succor.

"Whatsoever He saith unto you," she then enjoins upon the attendants at the table, "do it." "Fill the water-pots with water," said the Master in His time. It was in itself a reasonable order, because the water pots were there for the necessary washings at a Jewish feast; but what connection they could have with a replenishing of the wine cups, it was not easy to see. The command, however, was obeyed, and compliant with the word of Jesus, they drew from the copious reservoirs and bore their well-filled vessels to the presiding guest at the supper, that he might first taste the new draught for refreshment before it was furnished to the company.

What a trial of faith must this action have been to the menials in waiting! Expected to bear wine, they are bidden to the flowing water-jars for a supply. The attempt at obedience, however, converts them into what they were expected to be, and makes them witnesses of the miraculous change of the simple liquid into a delicious means of entertainment, brought about by the power of Christ.

Now this narrative, which is full of instruction, illustrates the general duty of obedience to God, and the happy effects that are sure to follow. There is no command of God which it is not wise to submit to.

"The statutes of the Lord are right and rejoice the heart." "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. Moreover by them is Thy servant taught, and in keeping of them there is great reward."

In the moral precepts of the Bible, there is the best possible evidence of the Authority of the Law-Giver, in that they convert into rich tributaries to enjoyment the most simple acts, and the least promising oftentimes of results. "To do justly, and love mercy, and to walk humbly with God" are courses which repay themselves. He who proves a faithful servant to his Maker has a perpetual festivity. His good wine is ever kept until the last, and it grows richer with his fidelity until life closes.

Nor is the benefit accruing to society at large from the practice of moral virtues any less conspicuous than to their individual doer, for acts of religion are the best possible security of the welfare of the world. Where all are honest and just and charitable there is the reign of universal happiness. The precepts of Christ are so excellent in their influence as to commend Him to all men for their Leader; and they so far transcend any other system of ethics, that the question need only be asked, 'is this an injunction of Jesus?' to secure the answer of every intelligent observer, "*Whatsoever* He saith unto you, do it." Yes,

those directions of His Gospel, which are mortifying to human pride, and make heavy exactions upon self-restraint and endurance, as the forgiveness of injuries, for example, meekness under insult, and humility in suffering—these, though difficult to accept by one of lofty bearing, are yet so thoroughly redeemed from all savor of meanness by the Pattern of Christ, and so affectingly impressed by His Word, that they are reduced to practice for the sake of their Author, and they bring *their* peace.

But I am not unaware that the commands we are called to obey, in the service of God, have not always the advantage of seeming to be effectual, of their own fitness, to the production of results which are anticipated from them. Like the order of the Saviour to fill the water pots with *water*, they appear ill adapted at times, and often unequal to the accomplishment of the end in view.

Of directions I speak touching *what* the Great Lawgiver would have His creature to do, or *how* He would bring His will to pass, in reference to which the creature is not competent to judge. I have taken the position already that the whole of life is a sort of childhood; that, as in our earlier we are subject to parents, so in our later as well as earlier years we are under the government of Almighty God. The child is unequal, on account of immaturity, to understanding

the reason for his father's precept; nevertheless, he complies. So man, I assert, whatever his age, is not to be the judge of his Maker's commandment, whether it be wise and sufficient, but only its doer; for his Maker's commandment as far exceeds his comprehension as the parent that of his little one.

I need not argue a point so plain. For the disparity between age and youth is infinitely less than that which separates Divinity from humanity. "As the heavens above are higher than the earth, so are God's ways higher than our ways, and His thoughts than our thoughts." We cannot begin to rise to the Divine level. We shall be always learning, but shall never attain to the standpoint of Deity. And so, as children bow to a superior wisdom, and as in after life, learners defer to their teacher, soldiers to their general, and citizens to their governor—every intelligent and accountable being, being thus trained from the cradle to the grave, is dutifully bound to be obedient to the will of the Almighty Ruler both in this life and in that to come.

The lesson which we plainly learn from the experiences of this mortal state is that we are subjects. We are amenable to authority. Our concern is to know only what Authority prescribes, and not to question its policies or its aims. Satisfied that the Rule under which we act is lawful—and that the injunctions laid

upon us emanate from its supreme intelligence as well as legitimate power—we have but one course to pursue. It is to be teachable and loyal.

The responsibility of bringing about results in the way directed or with the means employed, lies not with us, but with Him who comprehends the occasion, and whose purpose it is to meet it. If it were a merely human authority under which we were called to serve, as that of a leader in state or war, our obedience might not prove a success. But under the Government of God all resources of strength are at the command of the Head, who *can and will* bring them to abet the cause of His people, wherever they undertake to do His pleasure.

It is never to be forgotten, that the work in which we engage as servants of the Most High is *His*. It is *His* to design and to accomplish, and we are co-laborers with Him. It is a task oftentimes we never could perform of ourselves. God would show us our impotence as well as our ignorance. Yet He would employ our faculties and honor us with the ennobling relation of workers together with Himself, though He impress at the same time the fact that we can do nothing without Him.

We know, for instance, it is the gracious design of God to save fallen men by the *Cross*. With a view to the recovery of mankind from a condition of sin and

to their deliverance from punishment, God has sent into the world His only Begotten Son, to take our low nature upon Him, and in that nature to die on our behalf. The cleansing and restorative power of His grace is to go forth from Jesus to every lost child of Adam. The injunction is, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," and the promise, "Thou shalt be saved." Belief—belief in the Saviour—faith in the Divine prescription of looking to Christ, faith that turns in the direction of Calvary, relies upon the Offices of its dying Lamb, and while striving to amend, says, in the language of suppliant trust, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean," this avails to salvation. "There is none other name given under heaven whereby we can be saved."

Faith in this provision is attested and approved by its efficacy to impart peace to the believer and to transform the character of those who obey the Gospel.

Among other directions in order to the same great end stand conspicuously forth the *sacraments of Christ*, the washing of Regeneration, and the Communion of His Body and Blood. "Repent and be baptized" is the first command of our Saviour. What virtue there can be in a sacramental observance it is difficult to understand. Why any inward and spiritual grace should be tied to the performance of an outward and visible act is not revealed to our sight, except

through the Divine appointment. Has God enjoined a particular kind of service? That is enough. His Word makes it binding, and His Word will make it effectual to the conscientious doer. It is the counterpart of the order of the Master, "Fill the water pots with water." Good wine shall come in the sequel. To the penitent and believing soul shall flow through the consecrated laver the Blood of Jesus Christ that cleanseth from all sin: and the simple elements of His Eucharistic Supper shall make it partaker of the Divine nature.

"Fill the water pots with water." A solemn mandate rests upon the Church of God to "Preach the Gospel to every creature." "Go, disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost": and as if to assure of unfailing success, the pledge of a perpetual presence is given. "*I* am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

In advance it would appear to be wholly impracticable by so slight an instrumentality as that of preaching the Word, to convert whole peoples, from false philosophy and superstition, from licentiousness and gross corruption to Truth and Purity. But witness the triumphs of Christianity over civilized as well as Pagan countries. See the position which it holds to-day, where image worship was once enthroned and

idolatry was once predominant, in what is now the dominion of the Church. The achievements of the past are a guarantee for those of the future. The agents which have been thus far successful will be crowned with equal victories hereafter. "Fill the water pots with water." "Behold, I have appeared unto thee," said the Master to His earliest called to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, "to make thee a minister and a witness both of those things which thou hast seen and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee, delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee to open their eyes." Whereupon, the converted Saul was not disobedient unto his Lord's instruction, but showed first to his countrymen, and then to the world beyond, "that they should repent and turn unto God and do works meet for repentance." What were the results of his Apostolic labor? I have no occasion to answer.

Three centuries later, two Christian youths of the Church in Palestine were wrecked upon the coast of Abyssinia. They were taken into the household of the king of that country, one for a cup-bearer, and the other for his scribe and treasurer; and upon the death of the king they were made, for their superior intelligence, regents of the country. In the latter capacity they exerted themselves to introduce Christian doc-

trine and worship, which with the help of Christian traders they made some progress in doing. At length one of them returned to his home and became a presbyter of Tyre. The other repaired to Athanasius, then bishop of Alexandria, and narrated to him his story, and entreated him to send forth some Chief Pastor of the flock to establish and perfect the good work so happily begun. The great hearted Father, no less great in the qualities of his heart, than of his head, thought no person so suitable could be found for such an appointment as Frumentius himself: and so, the missionary layman was made missionary prelate, and assigned to the spiritual jurisdiction of a field in which the Church afterwards flourished for ages, and where it yet survives—a monument to the fidelity of its Christian visitors.

"Fill the water pots with water." Within a short fifty years, bearers of the glad tidings of salvation have witnessed a remarkable change for the better in the once barbarous islands of the Pacific Ocean. Into some of these insular groups the Gospel was imported before the beginning of the present century. For a long and wearying period little impression was visible—but the seed was planted, and under faithful tillage, though the laborers were few, it ripened in time into an abundant harvest. Objectors are very apt to be credulous as to the genuineness of the conversion of benighted idola-

tors, and to doubt, if after all, any permanent good has resulted from Foreign Missions.

Hear what so intelligent a witness as the famous naturalist, Mr. Darwin, in his "Journal of Researches in Natural History and Geology," records of a visit he made to Tahiti, one of the Society Islands.

"Before we lay down to sleep," he says, "the elder Tahitian fell on his knees, and, with closed eyes, repeated a long prayer in his native tongue. He prayed as a Christian should do, with fitting reverence, and without the fear of ridicule or any ostentation of piety. At our meals, neither of the men would taste food without saying beforehand a short grace. Those travellers who think a Tahitian prays only when the eyes of the missionary are fixed on him, should have slept with us that night on the mountain side. On the whole, it appears to me, that the morality and religion of the inhabitants are highly creditable. There are many who attack both the missionaries and their system . . . Such reasoners never compare the present state with that of the island only twenty years ago, nor even with that of Europe at this day; but they compare it with the high standard of Gospel perfection. They expect the missionary to effect that which the Apostles themselves failed to do. They forget, or will not remember, that human sacrifices and the power of an idolatrous priesthood—a

system of profligacy unparalleled in any other part of the world—infanticide, a consequence of that system of bloody wars, where the conquerors spared neither women nor children—that these have been abolished; and that dishonesty, intemperance and licentiousness have been greatly reduced by the introduction of Christianity. In a voyager to forget these things is base ingratitude; for should he chance to be at the point of shipwreck, on some unknown coast, he will most devoutly pray that the lessons of the missionary may have extended thus far."

"Fill the water-pots with water." It is still the command of Jesus, and feebly, though with growing confidence, His Church is endeavoring to do what He requires. And accordingly, in Africa, in China, Japan and Hayti—and in the Kingdom of Greece our Branch of the Vine is attempting to fulfil her part of the duty with changeful yet certain promise.

We yield to discouragement at times because the agency is so insufficient. There is ground for discouragement in this, and it is a discredit to the Church—but still the cause is God's—and the agency is of His own election, and requires only to be multiplied:—and the foolishness of preaching, where the Cross is the theme, shall prove "the wisdom of God and the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." A human ministry, with the Divine Word

and Sacraments, shall never be found wanting in ability to accomplish the end whereunto God Almighty has ordained them.

And now there is one other argument for this duty of obedience—"Whatsoever He saith unto you do it"—which is very intimately connected with the honor of Christ and the efficiency of His Church. It is the argument drawn from the necessity of a Head. "Why call ye me Lord," asked our Saviour of His hearers, "and do not the things which I say"? There is many a man who professes and calls himself a Christian, who never has owned to his obligation to extend by his hand or his tongue the knowledge of Christ's religion. Many a person is there in the pale of the Church who has actually withheld his contribution from Foreign Missionary enterprise, or has given with such a stinted charity, as to proclaim to all around that he does not believe in going into all the world, or in the feasibility or necessity of preaching the Gospel to every creature.

In the face of an explicit and unmistakable direction, he follows his own judgment rather than his Master's, and virtually throws off his allegiance to his Lord. It is this practical disowning of the authority of Jesus Christ as Head that fritters away the energies of the Church and cripples her power. Her people are not united and their efforts are not put forth in

earnest. Is not this the explanation of the slow progress of the Church in the evangelization of the world? The inadequacy of the means! Not so much in themselves, as in the heartiness and combination of effort, with which they are applied to the gigantic result they are intended to accomplish!

Suppose that instead of scores, hundreds of laborers were engaged, and in place of a few thousands, as many millions in treasure were placed at the disposal of the Church, what a different achievement would be witnessed! And suppose that the now distracted forces of Christendom were combined together for the conversion of the nations—should we lament, as to-day, the little that is done? What power is now forfeited to Christianity by reason of divisions! And how is this forfeiture aggravated by the want of a thoroughly loyal and devoted spirit to Christ on the part of His followers! Is not the secret of all failures, if failures there can be under the banner of the Cross, the lack of genuine devotion in each individual believer? Consecration to the Master, unshrinking and unreserved consecration, that is what is wanted. One mind to direct and one purpose to absorb all that a Christian people have to offer, one heart, one soul among themselves—and all things common so far as there may be need,—that is the desideratum.

The fearful onset of an army is regulated by a single will, respected and yielded to by every soldier. There have been orders of men, and there are still orders of men, of which every member is bound to implicit and unquestioning obedience to their superiors. The old Templar, on entering into his secret fraternity, lost the power of free agency and personal rights, but he became, says one,* "a member and a limb of a mighty body, before which thrones (oftentimes) trembled; even as the single drop of rain which mixes with the sea becomes an individual part of that resistless ocean, which undermines rocks and ingulphs royal armadas. Such a swelling flood," it is added, "was his powerful league." Now combinations of this sort are never safe nor lawful, because no human head is infallible; and power cannot be trusted to a human being liable to be ambitiously guided and to be perverted by passion, without the awful risk of the worst possible consequences both to his subordinates and to the world.

Of such danger there is no occasion for alarm under the Headship of Christ. Incapable of error, entitled to the confidence of every subject of His rule, having a claim upon their entire services and all their possessions, it may be said, without fear of contradiction, "Whatsoever *He* saith unto you, do it." Be not

* Ivanhoe, vol. II. p. 14.

afraid nor ashamed to make unreserved surrender of your wills to Christ's. Having gifts of His bestowment, differing according to the variety of grace imparted severally to us, let us employ them all to His honor and praise. We are not our own, we have been bought by Him, therefore let us glorify Him in bodies and spirits which are *His*. Let us know beside Him no Master upon earth. Let us use our powers, not in sitting in judgment upon the wisdom of His precept, but in finding out what it is: then let us obey.

If He bids us to the renunciation of any practice or inclination, to taking up any cross, to observing any ordinance, to performing any service, to offering any gift, as we hope to be acknowledged as His disciples hereafter, let us heed Him to the very letter. What are the marching orders of the Great Captain of our salvation? Let the soldier regard them as he desires to please Him who has called him to be His follower. The soldier has nothing to do—I repeat it—with the criticism of instructions issued from headquarters, he is not often qualified for the task, but his duty is to conform.

So let every member of the Church Militant do in his place. Let every believer in Christianity, whether the sworn disciple of its Author or not, bend his own mind and will to the known Word of Jesus Christ, "Fill the water pots with *water*." Yours is a simple

task. You have not to make the wine for the furnishing of the world's banquet. You have not to exercise the converting and transmuting power. That belongs to Christ. Your office is to do only what you can. Do your best. Let it be recorded of you, "You have done what you could." Let every man and woman and child be obedient alike; and Christ shall work through them all, combining and consolidating their several acts and gifts in one mighty aggregate, before which all difficulties shall yield in the path of the Gospel through the world.

SERMON IV.

FILIAL PRAYER.

"*If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him.*"—ST. LUKE xi. 13.

THE Holy Spirit is not bestowed once for all upon man on his admission into the Family of God. Grace is not of the nature of a deposit in the soul—to be drawn from afterwards as a source of supply for its spiritual wants. It is rather a stream flowing from its fountain. It is like the principle of life, which is continually sustained by its Author, "in whom we live and move and have our being," and from whom none of us can separate without ceasing to be. It is like the emanation of light, which the attempt to shut off from its connection with the sun wholly extinguishes.

When it is said in the Scripture that we are "baptized by One Spirit" into Christ, with whose influences we are "sealed," and in whose bestowal we have received the "earnest" or pledge of our

inheritance in Heaven, it is meant that Divine Grace has given us a new birth—stamped a fresh witness of adoption upon our souls—and begun within us a work, whose very beginning is a promise that it shall be carried on unto perfection and crowned with redemption at the last. Still the continuation of the blessing which we have had already is dependent upon something else than past supplies, even upon new and daily communications from above for the assistance we require.

The result of the action of God's good Spirit upon every susceptible creature is to "put into his mind good desires," which it is the office also of the Spirit to "bring to good effect." "Good desires" every one of us experiences in his thoughtful hours. "Godly motions" are awakened in all our hearts from one time to another under the suggestion of causes we do not always analyze. Sometimes we endeavor to yield to these motions; sometimes we neglect them. Their delicate and transient — their fugitive nature, when exposed to adverse influences, prompts often a misgiving as to the possibility of maintaining a consistent Christian life, however earnestly such a life be wished for. Man puts the question to himself, "How *can* I keep up with the demands of Religion, and the obligations I am under by reason of the promises and vows of my Baptism, and so

presume to acknowledge them, publicly, before the world?" and answers to himself, "I cannot." The Church agrees with him up to a certain point: "My good child, know this, that thou *art not able* to do these things of thyself—to walk in the commandments of God and to serve Him, *without His special grace;* which thou must learn at all times to call for by diligent prayer." And then, the Church instances to him two particular helps which he cannot dispense with with impunity, namely, Prayer and Holy Sacraments.

Let us consider the former of these at this time.

Our Lord lays great emphasis upon Prayer as an effectual instrument of procuring what we want. "Ask, and ye shall receive," is His precept; "Seek, and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you. For *every one* that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. It has been observed, that no command to pray is recorded in the Law of Moses, though the practice was recognized and its duty implied. The reason assigned for this omission is this, that no command was necessary, as nature dictated the act, and at times exacted it as a privilege. But under the Gospel of Jesus Christ, it is expressly enjoined, as due to those relations in which a man stands to his Father in the Covenant of Adoption, and in which he is particularly favored to ask what he will.

Paternity is the feature neve to be lost sight of in all the inculcations of Christian service. This is the groundwork of Christianity and of all it requires.

One can imagine a knock at the door and a suit to the ear of mere power and majesty, which might not be heeded, which might be repelled, and even resented. Importunity too might have to be used with selfishness and apathy, before an answer could be gained. But the sympathy of a Parent can hardly be addressed without effect. The relation of a parent and a child is that of affection and protection, with care for its charge on one side, and that of trust and dependence on the other. Human imperfections apart, this is a tie of spontaneous beneficence. Passions may ruffle, misconduct may estrange, divisions of interest may interfere with the proper exercise of a father's love, making him "evil," as the Saviour calls him, peccable, faulty, liable to sin, on account of the corruption that infects our nature. But infirmities put aside, and all that perverts and deranges being removed, this is the completest picture of goodness in which the image of God can be beheld. That father at the worst is scarcely to be found, who, if his son ask bread, will give to him a stone, or if he ask fish, will offer him a serpent.

"If ye then, being evil, know how to give gifts unto your children, how much more shall

Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit unto them that ask Him ?"

The Lord's Prayer, which was set forth by Jesus in answer to the request of His disciples for a guide to petition, is both a form to be used and a pattern to be copied, in all approaches to the Majesty on high. Framed in accommodation to a filial privilege, it opens with an address to a Common Father. Not forgetting His greatness, it acknowledges too His being in Heaven. It unites reverence with love: and to both it adds the farther element of piety, invoking sanctity upon the mention of His Name, and a speedy advent of His rule over all His creatures. With this strain of adoration it connects a childlike supplication for earthly wants: daily food for soul and body, forgiveness of sins, protection against exposure to forms of temptation, and deliverance from evil, including escape from the author of evil. What could one desire beside, and in what simpler and more expressive terms could he make his prayer? He might desire riches. But "they that will be rich fall into temptation," from which he asks to be guarded. He might desire to be spared from Providential trials, and he does so to the extent of exemption from "evil," but all trials are not *evil*, being charged with good and the necessary discipline of a human creature. His ascription is in keeping with the most implicit faith. The "Kingdom, the Power,

the Glory" he attributes to his Father, for his Father is supreme, His power is infinite, and the honor of His adorable acts and His all-wise proceedings belongs to Himself. If this ascription was not added by our Blessed Lord, it is inspired in sentiment and is sanctioned by the use of the Church in all ages.

If now you turn to the corresponding passage with the text in the Gospel according to St. Matthew, you will find that its reading in the latter clause of the verse differs in phraseology from the reading in St. Luke's. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in Heaven give good *things* to them that ask Him." You perceive that a larger range of bestowments is here intended than in the Text. It is not only the "Holy Spirit," but "good things" in general—that are to be reasonably expected of our Father. And this is agreeable to the tenor of Inspiration. "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life which now is, as well as of that which is to come." "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

It is true that earthly blessings come without asking. "He maketh His sun to shine on the evil and on the good, and sendeth His rain upon the just and on the unjust." The difference between the

earnest suppliant and others is that "all things work together for good to them that love God," while they may work to ultimate hurt in the case of those who do not ask to be defended. Man's excesses and perversions make everything perilous without his Father's care. His short-sighted policies and aspirations need a wiser regulation than his own. He wants just what he enjoys when he seeks it—a providential watch and a paternal correction.

Most of life's experiences are happy. The gifts of a Beneficent Power far outweigh in their number the adversities that overtake us. It is the design by Goodness to lead men unto repentance. This is the end of the Manifestation of Love to draw men back to a Most Merciful Father—from the service of sin and the devil. But Goodness fails to reclaim oftentimes, and judgment ensues. Famine overtakes the prodigal just at the moment of utter destitution, when he has wasted all, and has nothing with which to meet it. It is his extremity that embraces the last opportunity. He arises and goes to his Father before death closes the way; and his Father sees him when a great way off, and hastens and embraces him, and falls on his neck and kisses him.

When Solomon presented his petition to the Almighty, "Give me now *wisdom and knowledge*, that I may go out and come in before this people: for who

can judge this Thy people, that is so great?" "God said to Solomon, Because *this* was in thine heart, and thou hast not asked riches, wealth or honor, nor the life of thine enemies, neither yet hast asked long life; but hast asked wisdom and knowledge for thyself, that thou mayest judge My people, over whom I have made thee king: Wisdom and Knowledge is granted unto thee: And I will give thee riches, and wealth and honor, such as none of the kings have had that have been before thee, neither shall there any after thee have the like."

Now, corresponding to this "wisdom" desired by Solomon is the "*Holy Spirit*" desired by us—which is the "Spirit of wisdom and understanding, of counsel and ghostly strength, of knowledge and true godliness, and the Spirit of God's holy fear." The marks of correspondence are two: first, they are both superior to all other gifts whatever, but the Spirit is ever superior to Wisdom: and secondly, they both furnish a qualification for the higher demands of life—wisdom making its possessor competent to rule in that important position to which it pleased God to call him, but the Holy Spirit making its recipients equal to the duties of the present and to the requirements of immortality beyond.

When therefore you ask the Holy Spirit for yourselves, you ask for "the *unspeakable* gift" of God, the

priceless beyond all others, with the exception of the gift of His Son. You can desire nothing superior.

And what is the gift of the Holy Spirit? It is that heavenly grace which raises to a true and perfect manhood; which regenerates, then sanctifies; which brings first into contact with the Life of God, and then nurtures and unfolds that Life in the soul of man.

A late writer has compared the spiritual New Birth of man to the impartation of natural life to inanimate matter. There is one point in which the analogy fails. A crystal has life of no sort whatever within its exquisite composition. Man, on the contrary, has life of high order, partaking of the Divine in its origin, though debased and corrupted by sin. And yet into its elements, the Life of Jesus can enter to recover them from their debasement and cleanse them from their corruption—and assimilate them into itself. The emphatic point of the comparison is in the inability of the crystal to generate life in its want of life, and in the inability of man to *re*-generate his being in the want of that power which Christ only can impart. Humanity in Jesus is joined to something transcending its own order. It is united to Divinity. It brings into connection the godlike and the manlike in a way to elevate and transform the latter, far beyond the pattern of the original Adam. There is a "measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" which is unattainable

altogether except by His Spirit. We must have that Spirit. It is the only secret of growth; it is the only agency by whose fellowship and strength we can hope to be made better.

And how shall we obtain it? By prayer. It is our Father's Spirit, and asking its gift is asking to be made like Him. He has sent it forth into our hearts, because we are sons—it may be we are wandering and prodigal sons—that we might come to ourselves and return unto Him. No man ought to pray to be delivered from his earthly misery, no matter what its form, unless he seeks for that deliverance in the direction of his Father's House. His misery was sent upon him in order to ensure his repentance. The disquietude a man feels in his distance from God, and the dissatisfaction of earthly gain and honor, and the voids after pleasures that vanish in the getting—are all so many monitors to lead a man home. They are the proofs of his destiny to be godlike and with God, and of the insufficiency of aught else to give him peace but the service and communion of God.

"Oh, who will show us any good?" there are *many* to say, exclaims the Psalmist; but *his* antiphon in reply, his answering note was this, "Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us. *Thou* hast put gladness in *my* heart since the time that their corn and wine and oil increased;" which so far from awakening

dissatisfaction and envy, left him in a fuller enjoyment than before of the only real happiness.

Go to your Father in Heaven, with your prayer for His Spirit, because you aspire to a better life. Seek of Him "that peace which the world cannot give." Ask for rest in Him.

You have a charge to keep—a covenant to save from being broken, a calling to fulfil in life from youth to hoary age, a God to glorify, a soul to prepare for Heaven. You are in your Father's household, your name has been written among the first born in His family on the register of Heaven. You perhaps by past carelessness and sin have almost blotted it out—but still it remains. He being faithful who hath promised all that adoption imports, your own breach of your promises need not stand in the way of renewing or confirming your vows, if so be you are sorry for the past. "Why will you die," children of the Christian Israel? Has God any pleasure in the perdition of a soul? Is even the death of the *wicked* agreeable to His will? Perhaps the remembrance of your privilege has always been dear to you: you have never wilfully forfeited it. Yours is the easier task of confidence and consecration, and the Confirmation of your Baptism, because of conscientiousness hitherto. But whatever your present or former condition, you have need of the strengthening Grace which comes through

Confirmation, and which God through that channel will give you in answer to your prayer.

Add to the request of your lips the earnest endeavor of your acts. When you pray, "Thy name be hallowed," revere it—enshrine it in sacred and solemn associations—mention it with veneration and awe, and let it ever remind you—"Thou God seest me." When you petition that His Kingdom may come, remember that the Kingdom you desire is that of His rule over loving and obedient subjects, and be yourselves truly loyal to your Head. When you ask for daily bread, seek it in means of grace for your souls, and in lawful employment for the sustentation of your lives. Forgive, as you would be forgiven. Avoid and tamper not with temptation, as you would not be led into it. And shun the evil—and flee from the Evil One—from which and from whom you would be delivered by grace.

So shall your prayer avail, and as you proceed in the path of duty, you will find the truth which is more than implied in the interrogation of your Saviour, "Your Heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him."

SERMON V.

THE WORLD ASLEEP.

"*And that knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep.*"—ROM. xiii. 11.

THE flight of another year in life subtracts just so much from its term. The completion of another annual round of privileges reduces their number by so many as that round contained. The opportunities of life diminish with its passage. The day of its enjoyment lessens, as that day advances; and the night of its trials grows shorter as the weary hours strike out their completion, one after another, on the darkened face of the dial.

St. Paul, with this thought in his mind, often exhorted his brethren to fidelity. "The time is short." "The day of the Lord cometh as a thief in the night." "While we have *time*, let us do good." But in the text he seems to have been moved to a mixed purpose, both of admonishing and cheering them. For taking it for granted that they had done their duty hitherto in obeying the commandment to love, he

reminds them, one and all, that "now is their *salvation nearer* than when they believed." The glad morning is approaching, the night of life is drawing to its close. What it becomes them to do is—to put off the remaining habiliments of the world, and to put on the beautiful garment of Immortality, or of a garment meet for the appearing and communion of the Saviour, whom they hope speedily to see. How welcome to many ears must have been this mode of speech! How many must have been relieved by his words of the heavy burden upon them, incident to the persecution of the Church, and the sufferings of Christians every day! How animating the prospect of a change! To the weary and the prisoner, to the sick and aching with pain, to the bereft and disconsolate, to the unfortunate and despondent—how happy the announcement that they shall soon be at home and at peace with God! This was in the thought of the Apostle, as he wrote; and yet, his mind was occupied with a still more important idea—and a grander vision withal for his fellow-believers—that they should make the most of the opportunities they had, to do their whole duty while they remained in the flesh, and to be increasingly diligent as the time grew shorter, in order to accomplish their perfection.

For there is a purpose in human life. There is an object worthy of its gift which is set before the liv-

ing. Threescore years and ten are an invaluable boon. What, in their thoughtful improvement, may not be done! What may not the scholar achieve, the philanthropist execute, the workman in any calling in life bring to pass in that period of time! But shorter allotments of years, from the brief span of an infant to the measure of youth or manhood, have their design. He, who is earnest in any sort of pursuit, and keeps before him a lofty standard, is fully sensible of the worth of living. He is jealous of the invasions upon his time by sleep. In the stimulating excitement caused by zealous work, he almost forgets, he well nigh dispenses with slumber. There are turning points and crises, in which the interruption of his labors by unconsciousness seems like an actual subtraction from the term of his existence.

But still this interruption is unavoidable. Repose must be had. The mechanism of both hand and brain requires a stop to be put to their active operations. Exhaustion follows overwork, and disease and death hasten prematurely in its train.

This, however, being conceded—the pillow is not appointed, but for its few brief hours, and repose was never designed to be the continuous condition of men, except when they be forced to it by positive disability.

Now the imagery of the Apostle, in which he has

been pleased to press home his thoughts, is suggestive of a lesson which I wish more particularly to unfold in what remains to be said. The lesson is this—that Life is not only periodically broken into by the demand for rest, but that it is itself, to the majority of mankind, of the nature of a slumber, by reason of the *insensibility* they commonly exhibit to the condition of things in which they live, and the demands of the future before them.

The characteristic of Sleep is that it produces insensibility—that it suspends consciousness. Things about one are made unrealities for the time it lasts. There is no surrounding of the sleeper of which he is aware. So in human life, he is a rare exception to the crowd, who fully takes in the idea of his position, what it offers him, what it demands of him, and what he is in himself —and in comparison with that—what he ought to be or to become. It has been often said, how few people are fitted to live! They wake up at the close of life, to find, to their surprise and regret, what a magnificent possession they have had in their keeping—of which they never dreamed. They see, to their amazement, what talents have been theirs, and what attainments were within their reach. They look back through the vista of possibilities of good, along which they have passed, recall the privileges of their childhood and the promises of their youth, and feel sadly the fault of

having forfeited so much. To their souls, and to their really knowing that they have souls, they have been almost strangers. That they have been all the while accountable, that they have been stewards, not owners, of the talents reposed in their hands, that they have been redeemed, and baptized, and admitted into a state of salvation, that they have been daily hastening to their end ever since they were born, and are now, at death's door, on the point of giving their account, they have never considered; and they awake as out of a dream, to collect their thoughts as it were for the first time, and to discern clearly what before was visible, but they had not at all descried.

It is said of certain travellers that they have acquired little by their journeyings. Through inattention and want of interest, or for want of the intelligent mind wherewith to see, they have laid their eyes upon historical localities, works of art and persons of distinction, without being aware of what they saw, and might as well have been blind altogether for aught that they have been able to bring away with them. In like manner many pilgrims, on the long journey of man from the cradle to the grave, discover but little, appreciate but little, become but very little wiser, in respect to those things which concern them most as immortal and responsible creatures.

I ask, in view of this, if life in such cases is not very

properly regarded as a *sleep?* Is it not a sort of slumber, a state of suspended sensibility and temporary unconsciousness in reference to matters of the highest moment to us all?

Now in the common routine of our working days, we have some arrangement for arousing us from this suspended sensibility and unconsciousness of sleep—without which our plans might be seriously interfered with, or occasion us bitter disappointment by the consequences of our over sleep. It is often an arrangement wholly independent of ourselves. We make use of it because it suits our convenience. It is the steam whistle, perhaps, of the distant workshop; it is the swinging bell of the nearer factory; it is the "agnus" sounding from the Church's tower; it is the first gleam of light stealing through the lattice upon the sensitive eyelids of the sleeper; it is the gentle knock at the door which salutes his equally sensitive ears, and tells him that his night is over. The guest retiring to his chamber gives notice at the office, that he wishes to be called at a certain hour. If he fail to receive this important summons, the train or the boat by which he was to have been taken, has left without him; the business of the morrow is broken up. A little oversleep robs the lodger on the mountain top of the sight of the sunrise. A failure to awake saddens the poor child who had set his heart on his "May day." The

most brilliant phenomena sometimes irradiate the heavens when all the world is at rest, in showers of meteoric flame, in auroral flashes, or in belts of waving and enchanting color across the face of the firmament. What a loss is sustained by the sleeper! What a lament springs up from his very heart at having been prevented by unconscious slumber, from rising from his bed to witness so magnificent a spectacle! And what a regret at not having had a summons of some sort to deliver him from his helplessness!

I think we can draw, from experiences like these, a legitimate inference as to the necessity of some efficient arrangement, by which the mind as well as the body can be aroused, from time to time, from its condition of insensibility. It is equally desirable, and ought to be equally pleasing to mankind, that their intellectual and spiritual slumber should be brought to an end, in good season for improvement, as that the slumber of the flesh should be thus timely arrested. And yet such interruption is often most ungratefully received.

The young are startled by their parents or teachers out of their sweet dream of carelessness and pleasure, by being warned of the consequences of early indulgence. The danger of evil habits is pointed out to them. The strength with which passions frequently yielded to will assert their mastery in riper life, is

gravely impressed. They are admonished of the high promise they are in danger of forfeiting, and of the innocence and privilege of childhood's years they will shortly lose, if they forget the vows of their dedication to God. They are subdued, perhaps, and induced to pause; but they feel annoyed nevertheless by the solemnity of the lesson, and too often regard it as an unkind intrusion. Oh, if the young had but the eyes of the old, how gratefully would they recognize the gentle knock of their mother at the door of their consciences, or the tender voice of their father making its appeal to their understandings and their hearts!

Parents, in their turn, are frequently startled by their children in the discovery, all at once, of sentiments that they have imbibed, and of principles they have adopted, or are beginning to adopt, wholly contrary to those in which they have been nurtured. What is the origin—the occasion of this perversion? It is that the parents have fallen asleep, and while they have slumbered an enemy hath been near and sown tares among the wheat. As liberty, so virtue, with every Christian grace, is "the price of eternal vigilance." The forward steps of the young advance with a fearful rapidity, and fathers and mothers, who have grown indifferent or secure, find that their children are young men and young women, almost before they have dreamt of it, and that their pliable natures have

stiffened and hardened into independent elements almost beyond their control. It is a sad conviction to which they are forced, that they have been insensible to the progress of the change. "High time," they perceive, "that they should awake out of their sleep:" if so be, it be not already too late, to begin to interpose. The night may have been far spent before they were aroused: the decisive day may have dawned. If they have not before, in the susceptible period of their children's lives, sought to mould them and instruct them aright, they may have to lament that guilty omission forever.

The cock-crow, my brethren, by which erring Peter was recalled to himself was an invaluable monitor. It was as the voice of God. It was simultaneous with the turning of Jesus to look upon the recreant, and so was significant of a Divine reproof. As such it was a warning sent directly from Heaven. So that arrangement of the Year, by which the call of Advent to "repent"—"repent" is heard anew in our ears is a provision of the Church to bring the admonitory note effectually upon us, and to quicken us to thought. We need to be stirred up in our spiritual apathy. The old prophets of Israel were specially sent at certain intervals to admonish the people that they did "not know"—that they did "not consider" their true relations to God and their flagrant sins. John the

Baptist was commissioned to disturb the deep and protracted slumber into which his countrymen had fallen; and ministers and stewards of Christ, after his example, still come forth, as from God, to announce the approach, the well-nigh forgotten approach, of the Bridegroom—at midnight, and to summon His Virgins to meet Him. How solemn and awful seems that announcement, as often as we depict with the aid of quickened imaginations the last appearance of our Saviour to the view of men! How startling the summons of the Advent trumpet, "Prepare to meet thy God!" as it breaks in power upon our opening ears. Why is such an announcement, and why is such a summons, so thrilling to us all, but we have slept, in very truth, over the swift passage of life, and have been insensible practically to the destiny which awaits us, and the preparation which it requires?

Pause for a few moments and consider how limited is your knowledge of your own individual condition and character in the sight of God: what is the measure of your repentance, what is the extent of your conquest over familiar sins, what is the amount of your obedience to the Commands of your Maker and your imitation of the Pattern of His Incarnate Son? Are you mindful of what you are, and of what you should be in order to be saved? Are you impressed to-day, as you will be in the day of death, with the

importance of being Communicants in the Church of Christ—and of being to Him true and faithful servants, as you hope for His divine approval?

Consider still farther your comparative insensibility to the claims of your fellow creatures upon you—their title to your just and generous dealing—your obligation to be honest, even-handed and true in the transactions of business; your duty to be charitable in speech, forgiving in temper and sympathizing in spirit in their troubles and misfortunes—to banish resentment, to dismiss all revenge, to harbor no longer coldness and indifference—but to love as brethren and treat them as the children of your Father in Heaven. In the light of that hour, when the affairs of this world will be seen as they are seen by the spirits of the just made perfect—how will your selfishness and hatred and malice appear to you then—over which now perhaps rests the veil of concealment, if not the glamour of falsehood?

Ponder once more, my beloved, your duty to the world, and especially to your country, and take the guage of your discharge of that momentous debt. What have you done to make the world better? As you read of its apathy to religious ministrations, as you think of its cults and traditions and philosophies, reminding you occasionally of their likeness to the Gospel—you sink down perhaps into utter unconcern

about their danger, and your obligation to preach to them the unsearchable riches of Christ. And so, you are going to the presence of your Lord, to confess to your neglect of His great command to evangelize the nations—and to perceive in that presence your inexcusable guilt.

You look around upon your country and all seems prosperous—and so it is for the most part, by the goodness of God. You hear of its growth, its wealth, its resources and its prospects. As you listen, you catch the sound of a multitude of footsteps—you discern the tread of hundreds of thousands of people marching westward from the sea coast (from New York alone nearly half a million of emigrants took their journey to the prairies in a single year)—and you forget to ask, for what purpose have they come, what have they left behind, what have they brought with them;—and what, with their principal desire to gain a living, their churches and their schools left at home, and their entrance in among you without pastors, without teachers, without the restraining associations of the lands of their birth—with infidelity in some instances and the abandonment of belief in God for their companions in the wilderness—you forget to ask how are they likely to affect your country in this condition of things—and you sleep carelessly and securely over their movement, until by-and-bye they outweigh

you in influence, they exceed you in numbers, they get the control of your republic—and are beyond the reach of your ability to guide them aright.

So, in other quarters of the land, there are six millions of a race, naturally religious, even to the extreme of superstition, but now drifting from former moorings, who to qualify them for their citizenship need Christian education and nurture; and yet without it, except on the narrowest scale, they also are to have a share in shaping the national destiny.

The Church stands as a Monitor to apprise you of all this. She offers to be your instrument to avert the evil and to secure the good. You cannot go yourselves into her service—you go through Christ's ministers—to whom you give of your means what you cannot furnish by your labors. The servant of the Lord who endeavors to interest your exertions is blamed by some among you for asking so often and so loudly for your gifts. He cannot do otherwise, and be true to his Master. He ought to obey God, rather than please men. Rare indeed is the man who regrets having done good. Exceptional is the case of him, who would recall if he could what he has laid out in Christian beneficence. Often will you find a person who chides at the informant, who, *officiously* as he thinks, apprises him of danger which he himself does not see. But if the danger prove real he is

grateful for information. While one is asleep his house may be undermined, and he dream not of it. Happy is he who is awaked in time to discover that the streams are rushing from the hills, and that the river is swollen by which he lives—and that the foundations are loosening on which his house is built—so that he he may escape destruction.

It is not always that catastrophes so grave come about in this manner. Sometimes the percolating rill, so small as to be hardly perceived, eats away the earth, little by little, on which the substructures rest—and the stones gradually sink and disappear, which uphold the building. Here is impending evil—not imminent, but certain. The greater the occasion for warning in proportion to the stealthiness of the foe. Be sure, dear brethren, that your foundations are planted upon a rock. Be sober, be vigilant, be ever watchful of the welfare both of yourselves and others; and that, knowing the time that the season for sleep has passed, and the day for action has risen upon you.

SERMON VI.

A CHRISTMAS SERMON.

"I came down from Heaven:—not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me."—ST. JOHN vi. 38.

HAD it been possible for the Holy Child in the manger to comprehend His position, and in the hour of His weakness to tell who He was and whence and why His coming, He would have spoken words like these. He who took upon Him our flesh of the Virgin Mary His mother, had first dwelt in "the bosom of God." In His own proper Person, He was the Son of God, who "came forth from the Father" and came into the world. "No man hath ascended up to Heaven, but He that came down from Heaven—even the Son of Man, who is in Heaven." "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God;" "and the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." In keeping with this witness was the declaration of the angel who announced to the shepherds the glad tidings of His Birth, "unto you is born this day in the city of David

a *Saviour*, which is Christ the LORD." Christ the Lord! not Christ the child of a woman, the son of a virgin, and nothing more. And harmonious with the language which I have chosen for a text, "I came . . . not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me," is the song which followed from a chorus of the heavenly host, "Glory to God in the highest—peace on earth, good will toward men."

Thoughts arise in human hearts sometimes about unpitying justice, and a voice of condemnation from the Throne of God toward a poor guilty world. It is well to remember at such times what the Will of God in respect to us is. "God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." That delightful event which makes us all so happy to-day, had its origin in our Father's love. "God so *loved* the world that He gave His only begotten Son." Tender as was the sentiment of Jesus Christ our Lord, it was not more gracious and merciful than the sentiment of Him by whose appointment He appeared. If it was the "will" of our Saviour to lift up humanity from its dreadful fall, that "will" was but the index to the "will" of the Almighty which He sought to obey, and which through life He made to dominate His own. So that, rightly regarded, the condescension of Emmanuel, the touching humility of His advent, the affecting simplic-

ity of the surroundings in which He became incarnate, the sublime beauty of the spectacle above—Heaven drawing nearer, angels issuing forth from celestial gates and approaching earth, their audible voices, their visible hosts, and their equally assuring and transporting song—were but as a revelation of the Invisible One, a partial lifting of the veil from before that Person and Presence, with which men too commonly associate the idea of a cold and unfeeling removal from them, or of a stern displeasure at sin, which Christ only could appease.

I shall not depart from the spirit of these introductory thoughts in bringing before you the topic upon which I propose to speak. The topic is this: Obedience to the will of God, the mark of moral perfection both in our Great Exemplar and in all who attempt to follow in His steps.

Obedience is a beautiful virtue wherever it is rightfully claimed. The docility of a child is always attractive, and the promptitude of a soldier to heed the command of his general is a commendable trait. The child, for the sake of the discipline he needs, and the soldier for the unity and order of the army which cannot be had without submission to a head, obeys the power that is over him. Sometimes in the Church *obedience* is *voluntarily* promised, and is also in turn religiously exacted, as a means of breaking down

pride of self and stubborness of will. Where authority is set up of merely arbitrary motion, it is a dangerous yoke. If its intention be discipline such as the young require, and not orderly government for the harmonious working of a society or compact which could not otherwise exist, it is plainly open to abuse. Responsibility is a matter which no one can throw off from himself. Implicit consent to be directed by another impairs private judgment and the power of guiding one's steps. It is out of place in manhood. It concerns only a condition of inexperience and frailty. It belongs to childhood in its ignorance of life, and in its unformed habits of reflection and discretion.

But no such objection can lie to the most unquestioning obedience, on the part of either childhood or manhood, to the will of God, and to whatever that will may ordain for His creatures. The will of God is supreme authority in itself. It holds legitimate jurisdiction wherever His subjects are found. It is a perfect standard of action. So far as human wills differ from it, they are deficient and at fault. It is the aim of all beings who would not be found wanting, to imitate the pattern of the Son of God by an entire conformity to the mind and commandment of their Father in Heaven. Law is only another name for the will of the Deity; but all government over men is

the act of intelligence, of benevolent interest in whatever concerns them, and not the reign of some abstract principle.

There are persons, my friends, who are scrupulously obedient to the reign of Law:—who besides obeying it in their outward actions, cultivate within them the virtues of honesty and honor, of kindness and affection, of truth, purity and justice, because they recognize these as parts of Duty. They are urged on to their attainment by their intense desire to make the most of themselves, and by their sense of their fitness. They would fulfil their destiny—they would rise up to the measure of their capabilities and the demands of their consciences. Their effort is not Religion, however, in the sense of a service binding the creature to the Creator. Sometimes, alas! they avow an ignorance of the Being of God, or affirm a doubt of the Personality of His existence, and of the reality of any relations between us and Him beyond that of subjects of the order of Nature. The object of their worship, so far as they worship at all, is the material Creation and an ideal humanity which they endeavor to realize in themselves and their race. A recent writer* has said, that the lofty aspiration of men of this description can hardly fail to be admired. Their strictness of

* Old Faiths in New Lights.

principle in the absence of Christian Faith must command respect. One wonders, as he looks at their daily lives, how they can keep them so fair by simple self-culture, and in the loss of incentives such as the Religion of the Gospel holds out for acceptance.

But I maintain the fact that no moral attainments that ignore the item of Obedience to God, that leave out of account the golden chain that connects with a Personal Deity—a child with his Father, a subject with his Ruler, a pupil with his Guide, and that substitutes Nature for the Word of Revelation, can ever rise to the loftiest standard.

(*a*) The feature of *obedience* acknowledges a Power that either does exist, or does not exist. If it does not exist, Obedience can do no harm. But if it really exists, not to recognize its claim upon worship and service, and upon the conscious exercise of filial affections, is a fearful deficiency. It is equivalent to denying any divine affinities on the part of man, and sinking duty to God to simple duty to our neighbor. (*b*) The feature of Obedience sets before our eyes the will of a Being for our guidance and government, which is infallibly right, and whose directions are faultless—beyond all comparison with any dictates of conscience or ideals of one's own creation. The man who rejects or ignores a Revelation sets up for his model what *he* conceives to be perfect. His enlightment is from

himself and human sources without him. He is his own standard of perfection. Revelation, on the contrary, shows us the mind of God. The matchless Life of Jesus, which is our appointed Pattern, is itself a manifestation of the Will of God, inasmuch as in all things He obeyed His Father, and was the express Image of His Person and the Brightness of His Father's glory. (*c*) Still farther, this feature of Obedience to Almighty God lifts up a man — wonderfully lifts him above his little parts and place, dignifies his whole nature and career, stimulates him by motives of likeness to his Maker, of destiny to Immortality and Eternal life, of companionship with angels and "the spirits of just men made perfect" when life is over; and in the mean while, of enjoyment of God's favor and protection—which put, as it were, a resplendent crown upon his virtue, weave a chaplet of imperishable and unfading lustre to be placed upon the brow of all his other attainments, which otherwise are earthly, and only of the earth, and that draw their nurture as they draw their hope, solely from terrestrial springs.

I turn with you now for the confirmation of my argument to the unapproached and inapproachable beauty of the Example of Christ. There was a beauty as we have seen in the picture of His infant innocence and the union of high Heaven with this low orb of ours over His humble nativity, but it was a loveliness

exceeded by His after life. See how early he began to recognize His mission, "to do the will of His Father." At the age of twelve years, He went up with His parents to the Temple service at Jerusalem. The place, the occasion, and all the holy associations that gathered around them, awakened, of a sudden, a new sense of His nearness to His Father and a profound impression of His filial duty. He took in, no doubt, as never had He done before the idea of His relations to "Him that sent Him." Just as the young, not infrequently, having been piously nurtured, on passing from nonage into responsible years, are, when confronted with the thought of duty to God growing out of their Baptism, and the act of proceeding to a yet higher step, strangely affected with a feeling of God's claim upon them and their personal responsibility to meet and discharge it: so the Holy Child Jesus, only in a manner more marked and exceptional. "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" was His remarkable answer to His parents, to whom His words were almost an enigma, but which to Himself were a most natural utterance out of the clear consciousness He felt of His Father's presence and appointment. See Him in the retirement of His subsequent youth, "growing in wisdom and stature" and commending Himself daily to "*favor with God*" by the culture of those traits which are particularly ac-

ceptable to Him. As He advances to enter upon His ministry, He is baptized in the Jordan in order "to fufil all righteousness," or to comply, in other words, with every requirement of His Father; and the opening heavens over the waters of the river bear testimony to His piety from His childhood until then. "This is my Beloved Son," said a voice from above, "in whom I am well pleased." Upon this well-formed character and this consecration of self He was found equal to coping with the assaults of the Tempter. His first work in the ministry was the conquest of Temptation. To each of its three forms of enticement to sin, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life," He was proof-armed and invulnerable. He detected the sophistries of Satan by calling to His aid the Word of God. He sought His enlightenment from "Thus it is written." He relied not on His own wisdom or conscience, but rather upon what His Father had revealed in the volume of Inspiration for the guidance of His children. See Him again in the actual discharge of His high office (first) as Teacher: "My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me."—"Whatsoever I speak, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak"—as if He would affirm His scrupulous fidelity to His commission to make known the

Truth of God, as He Himself would declare it.* (Secondly) As Exemplar: "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in His love." The secret of favor with Christ, and with God, is a spirit of obedience. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." "The Son can do nothing of Himself; but whatsoever He seeth the Father do, the same doeth the Son likewise"—a saying that is true of the moral doings of Jesus, no less than of His acts of superhuman performance. Thirdly, As Saviour: "I am the Good Shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine—as the Father knoweth me (and), I know the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. . . . Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment," or direction, "have I received of my Father."† And when in compliance with this commandment of his Father, "He set His face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem that He might offer the sacrifice appointed to be made, though, as He

* "I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me: and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from Thee, and they have believed that Thou didst send me."

† Add also St. John viii. 28, and Psalms xl. 6-8.

approached the Cross, His soul is "exceeding sorrowful, even unto death," and He cried for a moment, "Father, save me from this hour," yet He meekly and resignedly added the prayer, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt." "Though He was a Son, yet learned He *obedience* by the things which He suffered; and being made perfect, He became the Author of Eternal Salvation unto all them that obey Him."

Now what was the effect of this habitual teachableness and life-long endeavor to obey His Father? It was a perpetual spring of satisfaction. "My *meat* is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work." It was His consolation under trial, and His support—(as a good conscience always is,) in hours of suffering when left to the solitude of one's private reflections—perhaps forsaken and rejected. "*He that sent Me* is *with* Me: the Father hath not left Me *alone: for I* do always those things which *please Him.*" It was His ground of unfailing confidence and peace when His task was over. As He looked back upon life, He could say with glad assurance, "I have glorified Thee on the earth—I have *finished* the work which Thou gavest Me to do," and without presumption could He ask for a restoration to the glory which He had with the Father before the world was. Peacefully could He commend Himself into the

hands of His Father when He died. And after He had risen, how joyfully could He exclaim, "Go tell my brethren, that I ascend unto My Father and to your Father, and to My God and to your God,"—My mission being completed and its high end accomplished.

In the course of this discussion, my brethren, I have done little more than to allude to the *sinlessness* of our Saviour, in what might be called the moral aspects of His character. You may wonder perhaps that I have not spoken more of His spotless purity and rectitude of life. It would be impossible to enumerate in a single discourse all the details of a pattern, so perfect as His: His entire freedom from sin, and yet His tenderness for the sinner: His jealous regard for holiness, His withering rebuke of wickedness, and yet His compassion for the tainted and fallen, who had a tear for their guilt; His elevation of spirit above the attractions and honors and pursuits of the world, yet His concern for its interests and His sympathy with it; His large-hearted affection, His overflowing benevolence, His inexhaustible patience, His unwearying self-denial and sacrifice of Himself for the good of others. I might have enlarged upon these, but there was no occasion. They are inseparable from any character that can find favor with God, and they are familiar to

you all. I have laid emphasis to-day upon the item of Obedience, the crowning glory, I claim, of a Perfect Man; and I have pointed it out in its most conspicuous features—although in every feature of the Life of Christ it is distinguishingly seen.

And here I pause. I place before you this Pattern of Obedience to God as one of the striking lessons which the Feast of the Nativity suggests and inculcates. I have said, that beyond the innocence of the manger there is a more beautiful picture. It is, I repeat it, the after life of Emmanuel, interweaving into its whole warp and woof the golden threads of duty, and showing how attractive a consistent character becomes when moulded by the will and made consciously loyal to the law of God. I cannot hold out to you *all* the privilege of faithfully copying this life. Most of you have grown too old, if you have not begun before, to realize the perfect likeness of Christ. With what regret must every one look back from earlier or later manhood, or even from ripening youth, if he be thoughtful and serious, and see the wastes, the deficiencies, the faults, the sinful habits, the perverse tastes and indulgences that have spoiled the record of his years! He cannot, he never can be innocent again. He cannot recall his life to make it one of obedience and the fear of God, as it might once

have been. The past is the irrevocable and the unalterable past. The future alone is his, if God mercifully gives it to him. And yet that Future, by the gift of Grace, may be the unending ages, in comparison with which the past is but a moment. Another annual circuit of the Sun of Righteousness is beginning with the Church's year. Let us begin with it a course of truer fidelity to God and to ourselves.

To the little ones of our families and of society around us, life holds out what it denies to us, the invaluable opportunity of an imitation of Christ from its bright morning to its eve. Set it before them, and set it before yourselves henceforth, to maintain at all times a conscience void of offence. Respect your inward monitor and teach them to revere theirs. Have the fear of God in your hearts, and—as much as in you lies—implant it in their hearts. Let obedience to Him regulate your conduct and that of your children, wherever you or they may happen to be, whether in private, unobserved or beyond the power of observation, or whether in public when others eyes are upon you. Cultivate the virtues of a dutiful life. In prosperity, forget not the Author of your gifts, and in adversity remember that He appoints your condition, and be submissive to His hand. Seek the honor which comes from Him, brethren, and the

encomium of His lips upon good and faithful service, for it is the only honor really worth possessing, or that really lasts; and remember that His Son came down from Heaven, to set you an example, and to help you to follow it, in doing not your own will, but the will of Him that made you.

VII.

THE INSPIRATION AND VALUE OF THE BIBLE.

"And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read Esaias the prophet, and said, 'Understandest thou what thou readest?' And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me?"—ACTS viii. 30, 31.

WHEN copies of God's Word were made by hand-writing alone, and not by the press, they must have been as costly as rare, and therefore were not often the property of private individuals. It was the exception, and not the rule, when any single man was the owner of a Bible. He had a Psalter, for instance, or the Pentateuch, or a prophet. Or, if a Christian, he had a Gospel or Epistle, but he went to the House of God for the privilege of listening to the entire record of His Wisdom. The priest's lips emphatically kept knowledge for him, and he sought the law at his mouth.

It is every way probable, that the Ethiopian nobleman, who read the prophet Esaias as he was riding in his chariot, had only this portion of Holy Scripture in his hand. He carried on his journey this

one large roll of papyrus, on which were inscribed the Evangelical predictions of Israel's greatest seer. To have carried other rolls would have been very cumbersome, and he may not have had them. Though he was rich, undoubtedly, as he was a distinguished courtier under a distinguished queen, his knowledge was not that of a Biblical student or of one familiar with the Inspired Word. He beguiles the fatigue of a wearying travel and improves the leisure of his solitary drive by the perusal of a manuscript, he had doubtless taken for the purpose. He is on his return from the Temple at Jerusalem, to which he had been for worship. Whether a Hebrew by birth, or only a proselyte from the Gentiles, we cannot tell. It is not important to know. Let it suffice to say, that he was a devout and earnest believer, endeavoring to perpetuate upon himself the good he had received at the feast, and that he was moreover an honest seeker for Truth. He commands the favorable notice of the God and guardian of His people: for an humble minister of Christ, who chances to be travelling by this same road with the Eunuch, is bidden by the Spirit, to go, join himself to his chariot; and doing so, he hears him read a remarkable passage from Isaiah, which leads to an immediate conversation between them. The place of the Scripture which he read was difficult. It has perplexed many a scholar, and even learned

divines. But the Ethiopian stranger was singularly in doubt respecting matters and things which a child nowadays could readily teach him, being taught himself by the clearer light of the Gospel. He asks of Philip the deacon, "of whom speaketh the prophet this?" in reference to words that unmistakably apply to One Person alone, and that person Jesus. No wonder, then, that he desired Philip to come up into his chariot and sit by him. No wonder he replied to the interrogatory put to him by the interested preacher, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" —"How can I, except some man should guide me?" And yet, his docility was as beautiful as it was reasonable, and his prompt action upon the intelligence given him was as reasonable in turn as it was also beautiful.

In connection with the words which I have chosen for my text, there are several points of interest to which they naturally lead us, that it will be of service to us all to consider to-night.

In the first place, The BOOK, which the Eunuch was reading. It was the Prophet Isaiah, but the portion he perused is distinctly recognized, as we have seen, as a part of Holy Scripture.

I have observed that it was not common in ancient days, in consequence of the scarcity and expense of transcription, for whole copies of the Bible to be found

in private hands. And it is well for us to remember also, that whole copies did not really exist, until long after the several portions that make up the Sacred Volume were composed by their authors and given into the keeping of the Church. The Scripture is a collection of writings prepared for different purposes, and at different dates. Some of its pages are historical, some poetical, some didactic, and some epistolary. They were indited by statesmen, kings, wise men, prophets and priests, evangelists and apostles—and the period of their composition stretches over fifteen or sixteen centuries — from Moses to St. John. Its authors did not act in concert. They did not compare the several contributions to make a perfect work. There was no unity of form and style in their separate parts, as if they were fitting so many particular stones to be built up together into a harmonious temple. They wrought "better than they knew." They unconsciously made ready an edifice, into which every block and ornament fitted in its turn—because it was designed by an architect superintending the whole—and from which no block or ornament could be removed without marring it. But they were not aware of it at the time of writing. They wrote, as they were secretly moved, by a Power above themselves to communicate things they could never have discovered, nor could they in some instances understand; and

more often, they wrote, without even the sense of Inspiration, using their powers, as you and I use them every day we live, naturally and freely, to do whatever we wish to do. In both cases, however, they were instruments in the hands of God. The truth which they delivered in the one case was a Revelation, in the other not a Revelation in any wise, but an Inspiration. Truth undiscoverable by reason, is *revealed.* Truth that can be known of ourselves is *not revealed.* Moses, describing the condition of the Israelites in Egypt, had no need of superhuman wisdom; but Moses pronouncing the Law must first have received it from above. Solomon could write Proverbs without their communication from on high, but Isaiah and Daniel could not utter their prophecies until they were taught by the Spirit. It required no Revelation to enable St. Paul to write for his cloak, and especially his parchments; but Revelation was indispensable to the gift of that Doctrine which he neither received of man, neither had he been taught by man, nor reason, nor philosophy, but only by its Author, Jesus.

Yet all scripture is inspired—to the extent of being suggested or directed by God, and saved by Him from any mixture of falsehood. As by His Spirit He imparted all necessary Truth, so He guided His servants to such records of Truth—revealed or unrevealed—as would best serve the purposes of a communication to

man. His object being to instruct us, to convince us, to come tenderly and effectually near to us, He employed human creatures for His mouth-piece, and spake in such forms and modes as were best suited to the end.

Now what Inspiration is, the Church has never defined, nor can it be defined. How the Divine Spirit once acted on human instruments without suspending their wills, or to what measure it used them by a movement perfectly coincident with their own, no one, I suppose, but with their experience can tell: and probably not even he. This is one of those mysteries which we shall best leave where we find it, and acknowledge it to be inscrutable. We don't need to define a thing in order to understand it. Pascal complained of the attempt of Plato to give a definition of Man, on the ground that Man is more intelligible to us than it is possible for any definition to be. We know *Man* for ourselves. His outward form, his mental structure and his moral capacity are familiar to our minds, but we cannot describe these so well as we discern them. So the idea of God, it is implanted, or it is immediately embraced when His being is suggested. It cannot be set before us in any adequate language.

We take up the Sacred Volume which purports to have come from Him. It discloses His character, His

perfections, His purposes, His relations to us and His doings and appointments on our behalf. It speaks to us of His Will and His commandments. It records in advance His promise of a Saviour, and subsequently the history of God manifest in the flesh. It reveals our accountability, our immortality, and our way of attaining to eternal life. It lays open enough of the great unknown beyond us to relieve our doubts and apprehensions, and to make us desire its enjoyment. It tells us of a present God, a Providence ordering our steps and caring for our welfare. It has strains of consolation for our grief and words of peace for our compunction. To our most lofty aspirations it is equal, and to our frailest, most timid and abject moods it condescends to stoop to strengthen us and to cheer.

Does the sinner, stricken in his guilt, tremble before the disclosures and rebukes of the Scripture, and feel in his very soul, it is the voice of God? Much more are the penitent and the good man confident of the Divinity of its origin, when it teaches as never man taught, and responds to inquiries the most important we can make, and satisfies wants no where else to be appeased —save in the Cross and the Crown.

The adaptation, Beloved, of this Bible to our necessities, is the strongest proof of its inspiration. We require no confirmation from prophecy and miracle

after we have come to embrace it for itself. "If any man will do God's will he shall know" of His "doctrine"—whether it be from Him. And all we want to comprehend of Inspiration after this is not its nature, operation or degrees, but that it is verily the presence of God in His Word, to give it truth and power and make it sufficient to the demands of responsible, yet suffering creatures.

I ask you, in the second place, to consider in connection with the words of my text, the PERSON and EMPLOYMENT of the Ethiopian Eunuch, who is so graphically brought before us.

He is a minister of great authority under Candace, the Queen of his country. His employment upon his journey shows that the Scriptures are of interest to every class, the lofty as well as the lowly, the inhabitant of a palace no less than the inmate of a cottage. It reveals incidentally the fact, how much the Scriptures are prized by man in high position, when he occupies his day of leisure in examining their pages; when the wearying journey is refreshed by their study, and instead of other books his attention is given, deliberately and carefully given, to the Holy Bible, that Book of books, for the guidance and fashioning of his life. It illustrates still farther how that the noble in rank and the foremost in society are often the most ignorant of the Oracles of God, and stumble at declar-

ations on the Inspired leaves which are easy of solution by those humbler in place.

The humility of the Eunuch was attractive, but his dulness of perception was remarkable. It is not unfrequently found that men, otherwise learned and well furnished, are almost totally strangers to the meaning of the Scripture. They have mastered many sciences, but they are tyros in religion. They need to be taught first principles, the merest alphabet of the Faith. They have never given themselves the trouble earnestly to examine and discover what the Scriptures reveal.

Their leisure they never so employ. Their hours after returning from the Church, whither they have gone up for worship, do not witness to their perusal of the Volume of Truth, that they may be made wise to salvation.

To the poor and unlettered, and laden with burdens, they commend the Sacred Volume, but they do not seek it for themselves. They prefer a lighter reading or more worldly study, and often indulge in the thought that there are no depths to explore in the Revelation of God, and no treasures to search for and find. How entire their mistake! How shallow their understanding of the Word. The example of the Eunuch is an illustration of what a courtier, or a man of the world, can discover to interest his mind and

heart in holy Writings. And the untold number of scholars and sages, who in their turn have believed and pondered the Gospel, is an unanswerable argument to the objection of any that this Gospel is adapted to the simple alone.

And yet more, this inestimable Record of God's Word for man has afforded delight and consolation as real to the learned as the unlearned, to the honored as the unhonored, to the prince as to the peasant. All men, who have souls, and are aware of their possession, esteem a Revelation as above all price. They perceive in it wealth more precious than riches, and a feast for their fruition rarer than banquets. The unspeakableness of the value of the Gospel is apparent to every class and condition, when conscience troubles, or affliction or death overtakes it.

And now, without dwelling longer on this part of my subject, which, I hope, will lead to an imitation of the Eunuch, let me, thirdly and lastly, notice his *desire for guidance* by some competent instructor. "Understandest thou what thou readest?" asked Philip of the stranger; and the stranger replied, "How can I, except some man should guide me!"

There was something, I believe, in the question of Philip and his manner of putting it, that led immediately to the conclusion in the Ethiopian's mind that here was a teacher at hand every way capable

of directing him. His bearing inspired confidence, and prompted to an invitation from the nobleman, "that he would come up and sit with him."

It is the habit of men in all other departments of knowledge to look to instructors; and why not in a knowledge of the Scriptures? In art, in business, in the study of history and language, in the understanding of great masters and their productions, it is a felt necessity of all men to sit at the feet of the wiser. All books are made use of that might assist, and light is borrowed from every source that could abet the investigations of the learner. Why should it, and how could it be otherwise in the examination of the Bible? But few people are aware how much of a debt they practically acknowledge every day, in their reading of the Scriptures, they are under to persons more competent than themselves. First, they are under obligation to the Church for having settled the question, what are Canonical Scriptures. It was the Church that was divinely assisted and directed in collecting holy writings, and determining which were inspired, and which were uninspired; and this, the Church did in regard to the Old Testament, in the time of Ezra, and in regard to the New Testament at the Council of Nice. And though after Ezra came three of the Prophets, Haggai Zechariah and Malachi, yet the same continuous Church accepted and declared

their authority, while it rejected as spurious, though valuable, all that class of Hebrew writings, so near of kin to the Inspired, which from that time onward were known as the Apocrypha. The Council of Trent first disturbed this arrangement, which was ratified in full at the General Council of Nice—1200 years earlier.

Again, the common reader, and even the scholar is indebted to wise teachers for the translation of the Scriptures from approved originals—the correctness of whose renderings the unlearned have to trust, and to whose critical labor in testing the text the most learned pay respect and consideration.

Once more, there is a prevailing, traditionary interpretation of the sense of Holy Writ that is of vast assistance to us all in reading the Bible. We know not the measure of our obligation to this. We unconsciously make use of it in our perusal of the Scriptures. If correct, this traditionary, prevailing interpretation has come down a long distance, and may be traced up for its origin to Primitive Antiquity. The earliest Christians were taught the Truth of God by Apostles themselves. There was a "form of sound doctrine" current among them which they received and passed down. It took the shape of a Creed. It was embodied in liturgies, and embalmed in prayers and sacraments. It inveined, if I may use such a word, the writings of the Fathers all through, or ran

like a thread of silver through the less costly warp and woof of their productions.

It is this common Key to the Word of God, which, in the hands of the Church, as its authorized keeper, makes her to be "the pillar and ground of the Truth," its faithful witness. We cannot err, if we have this with God's Spirit.

Imagine, my brethren, that you were all to sit down and decipher the Scriptures for yourselves, stripped of all helps—such as I have now described, both for determining what are Scriptures and for making out their doctrine—of what invaluable assistance that you now, without weighing it, possess—would you then be robbed, and what difficulties would be added to your task of which you are now relieved!

I exhort you to be truly mindful of this inheritance. You cannot, perhaps, go back to the primitive witnesses to learn what they taught; but you belong to a Branch of the Catholic Church, that plants itself avowedly upon their foundation, and has pruned away excrescences from her offices of devotion until they are reduced to primitive simplicity. Take the Prayer Book of this Church as the embodiment of Apostolic Truth and Apostolic Order. Let its Faith be your guide through the pages of Inspiration. It will unlock their pervading mystery. The leading doctrines and precepts of the Gospel will be transparent under

its light. He that runneth may read, the letters will stand out so bold in which they are inscribed. Everywhere will be testimony unto Jesus. From Genesis to Revelations He will be seen, in promises, predictions, types, personages and histories—and the knowledge of Jesus will lay open all the rest.

Now you may think, as I proceed, that I represent the Scriptures as very easy to understand. It is in respect of what is necessary to belief and essential to practice. But there are difficulties to be surmounted, and abysses to be explored, if one would thoroughly know the Bible, for it is intended for study, and is laid out for the largest examination by man, even like the Book of Nature itself. In the material and intellectual world there is an unfathomed depth to be reached by the patient inquirer; so also, in the spiritual. The same God is the Author of both. His wisdom and power are to be searched in both alike.

The Bible, like the Universe, has been a study for ages. I doubt not that new wealth will be discovered continually in its exhaustless mine. I am sure that to-day, we can know more of its contents than any age before us, because of new light from criticism, history, human experience and the accumulation of past labors, brought to bear upon its illustration. In doctrine and morals we can never be wiser than our Fathers, but in the details of intelligence touching the deep things of

God, I see no reason why we should not advance upon the past, as much in Evangelical as in Scientific wisdom. This is the divinest feature of Revelation, that it opens up fields for investigation that neither man nor angel can ever perfectly traverse.

And now I leave you with this precious Book. Be like the Ethiopian of old, interested in its perusal. Make it your meditation in your leisure, have and employ all the helps to its understanding. Welcome the Teacher in Jesus. In joint studies where you can, as in a class for Bible instruction under your pastor, and in your individual capacity, be learners.

Nowhere else can you discover the way of life or the comfort you require. God's voice is in it, speaking to your souls. It is unchangeable Truth. The heavens and the earth shall pass away, but Christ's words shall not pass away. It is the mirror of God in which you may behold Him before you are called to confront Him face to face. He *comes* to you in it. Very near to you does He come, so that you may catch the accents of His lips. He would show you through His Word how to *come to Him.* Be not insensible of this aid. Search the Scriptures, which testify of Jesus and come unto Him with their guidance, that you may have Life Eternal.

SERMON VIII.

LIFE BY FAITH IN THE SON OF GOD.

"The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me."—GAL. ii. 20.

WHEN we are told by the Apostle, that "he lived—yet not he—but Christ lived in him," we naturally seek for the explanation of such words in his intense sympathy for and devotion to Christ. The follower lives over again the life of his hero. Quite content is the school of an admired philosopher to be lost in him whose name it honors, and the sole ambition of its members is to propagate his teachings. Patriot sons of their country sought only a week ago to drink in fresh inspirations of patriotism by celebrating the birthday of their country's father. It would satisfy the most loyal heart to see men aiming to reproduce in themselves and to awaken in their children the spirit of Washington.

Does this furnish the key to the Apostle's meaning? Is his "life of faith on the Son of God" only an enthusiastic discipleship? Is it simply the sentiment that

makes the brave soldier ready to die for his chieftain, or the ardent devotee to a cause wholly indifferent to other things than that for which he spends and is spent in turn?

One certainly cannot deny that there was much of this spirit manifested in Saul of Tarsus after his conversion; but it is equally undeniable that this spirit does not go to the depths of an answer in accounting for such professions as these. "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." We must descend still lower for a reason, if we would come at the true secret of this emptying himself of his own, to be filled with the life of Jesus. What do you understand by life, my brethren? It is the stream of conscious existence that flows down from sire to son. It is the spark of animation, kindled first by the Creator, that is fanned afresh into flame in each embryo child that is brought forth by its parents into being. The offspring derive it from a father before them and the inherited gift is affected in its kind by the character of the channel through which it passes. For instance, a bad man sends all too easily bad blood into the veins of his children. Vices propagate themselves and reappear in descendants. There is a sort of organic unity of the human race, by which every new-born babe becomes a fresh bud and shoot upon the parent tree.

The life begun at the root rises up and spreads into every single branch. The quality of that life is from germ to outmost growth the same. If the first father be corrupt, the last child that shall spring from him will be corrupt also. If the progenitor of all holds fast to his innocence, posterity will profit by it, and the possible fall of any will become less likely yearly as the moral constitution shall grow robust with use in each succeeding generation.

This is a law of transmitted life. It is a beneficent law, an ordinance for human good. But the very item in it, that provides a blessing for descendants, turns that blessing into a bane when existence is fouled at the source out of which it issues.

Let us look at this matter in the light of historic facts. We learn by the Word of Revelation—(for we never could have known it otherwise, as all monuments are lost, and no vague and rambling tradition could ever have made us sure upon the point)—we learn, I say, by revelation that God in the beginning made man upright. He was a creature without spot of sin, a being whose will was harmonious with his Maker's and whose tastes, propensities and desires were all unwarped and pure. It is hardly possible to conceive that he should of his own motion, have swerved from the line of rectitude. What could within him have turned him aside? What except

from without could have given a wrong bias to his will or a lawless stimulation to his passions?

If we had never been told of angels "who kept not their first estate, but fell," we should not have been able to understand this. But while defection in Heaven shows that sin is possible in wills untrained and hearts uncurbed, the spontaneity of the act was doubtless the occasion of that irremediable blight which was visited upon those angels that warred with God, from which less guilty creatures have been mercifully exempted. For a *Tempter* came to Adam in the garden, as a Tempter came to the Son of Man in the wilderness. In both cases there was an assault. The provocation to sin acted upon them from an outside source.

What avenue of approach did he choose? Upon what assailable points in man's nature did he make his onset? He threw himself, brethren, upon them all: into every avenue and upon every assailable point he brought his devices to bear, by which there was any hope of accomplishing his end.

Appetite, sentiment, intellect, the carnal, emotional and rational sides of humanity, he attacked; the three departments of our nature which complete the circle of its fashion and in the possession of which it is rounded out and made full. To the appetite of the flesh he presented, in the case of our First Parents, the

forbidden fruit of the garden, "that was good for food," and in the instance of the Second Adam, the temptation to convert stones into bread in order to appease His hunger. In the case of the former, the golden apple that was pleasant to the eyes addressed itself winningly to the *sentiment* of the beautiful, which craves almost always a right of ownership in that which delights it. In the case of the latter the vision of fair kingdoms with their glory opened as in a picture before His fancy, with the alluring promise of their gift—that gift being contingent upon a service which poor, fallen beings are all too apt to consent to for a chance so unwonted. The next and last temptation was *intellectual*, an appeal to the pride of man in the godlike capacity which he possesses, his power to rise to the level of his Maker, his opportunity to become as God, which the serpent cunningly urged upon the victim of his arts in Paradise as a reason for taking of the apple, and with which, in the wilderness, Satan crowned his efforts to lead our Great Exemplar into sin, by provoking Him to trust in His superhuman endowments and in the pledge of a special protection, and to show by one grand display of power in casting Himself harmlessly from the pinnacle of the temple, that He was indeed divine.

Under "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life," St. Peter sums up all conceivable

temptations. They are all here in the histories recited. In the one case they triumphed, in the other they were defeated. Adam, falling under their power, became a sinner himself and begat sinners after him. His whole posterity suffered in him, not by any arbitrary rule, but by that law of the Creator, which, meant for human good, makes like produce like, and entails the vices as well as virtues of the sire upon his offspring. I do not affirm that this one sin, standing by itself, has occasioned all the misery which has been visited upon the world, but this one sin, as followed up by its consequences, in repetitions of offence, in disordered constitutions, in tastes perverted, passions let loose, and consciences unseated in their lawful and appointed rule: *this* has been the prolific cause of woe.

Now, for giving fair space once more for a beneficial operation of the law referred to, God sent into the world His Only Begotten, to take this nature of ours upon Him, and having received it pure at birth by a conception of the Holy Ghost, to encounter in it our enemy and overcome him. This was the object of the Incarnation. It had never occurred to any mind, untaught from above, to think of such a method of recovering man from sin. Incarnations had been thought of with a view to display the Deity. The Greek had often fabled the appearance of some one of

his gods in mortal form that he might make himself visible and take some active part in human affairs. The Hindoo held of old, and holds to-day, the belief of what is called an Avatar of Vishnu, or a manifestation of one of his favorite triad—for the sake of manifestation.—All peoples have hoped by sacrifices to expiate their guilt. Some have striven by penances, and others by rigid practices of virtue, and others still by countless rites, to get rid of depravity: but it never was proposed either by heathen piety, or gentile philosophy to go back to the original experiment, by which sin was introduced, and by trying the same again to banish sin through the introduction of a new and faultless head of a regenerate humanity.

This simple method was of Divine suggestion. It was in the power, of course, of the Almighty alone to carry it out. It required a supernatural agency. Nature could not go back upon itself, nor rise above itself. The Author of Nature must step in, to set aright the working of His own disorganized creature. And so, the Word made flesh, the Son of God taking upon Himself, not the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham, and being made in all points like unto His brethren, save in the matter of sin, was first tempted like us, that He might conquer our foe, and then was put to those severe endurances, in which He learned obedience by the things that He suffered, and set us a

needed example—and having finally, upon the Cross, finished the work which the Father had given Him to do, He became "the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that believe."

I do not go at this time into any attempt to distinguish what Jesus did in the desert of Judea, from what He did afterwards on Calvary. I do not know that we can rightly draw a line between them. I have learned with you to offer my plaintive litany, "By Thy baptism, *fasting and temptation*, no less than by Thy Cross and Passion, Good Lord deliver us." There was an office of Atonement as well as of Obedience. Where the one begun and the other ended no man can say. They are bound inseparably together. They are each supporting to the other and are parts of a common whole.

We can be forgiven and rescued from the guilt of sin and also from sin itself, only through Jesus Christ. To be redeemed in Him implies all the rest. To be once joined to His perfect and unstained Humanity, so as to receive His life into our members—this, through grace, accomplishes our deliverance from ruin, both from the penalty and from the fault that brought it—and inaugurates that happy change that is eventually to be made complete in Heaven.

But alas! How can we be joined to Christ? We need another birth from an unfallen humanity.

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee," is the authoritative word of the Great Teacher, "except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit. Marvel not that I say unto thee, ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth." Like to this mystery is the new birth of the Spirit.

Men wonder and look incredulous, saying, "How can we be joined to Christ?" They think they can understand, because they know the fact of it, how a child can be connected by common blood with his parents, so as to derive into himself a portion of their likeness. But there is no blood lineage from Jesus, the second Adam of our race, by which His impress can be stamped on His followers! How can His humanity take hold on ours? How? Let me answer with the Scripture. By the communication of His Spirit. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit."

Christ has come into the circle of human society after a superhuman manner. His appearance is transcendental. He is altogether an extraordinary Being, miraculously born, Who has entered into the conditions and relations of the creature in a way quite

unknown to Nature. Being thus above nature in His origin, it is quite in keeping, Beloved, that the bonds of spiritual connection with Him should have nothing in common with those of natural kinship: that regeneration in Him should be instrumentally effected by a Sacrament, whose efficient agent should be His grace: that we should sacramentally also, partake of His broken Body and his shed Blood in order to keep up His life in our souls, that our life should be one of faith—that the medium of our union at all times should be spiritual, a heart bond, an inward loving tie, yet incorporated in outward forms and sustained by prayer and ordinances in the Communion of His Church. Let us not be unmindful of this special, peculiar, and spiritual method of communication with Jesus.

It is not any amount of *morality* that is going to join us to His Body, much less, that can dispense with the necessity of a union with Him. It is not by any inherent perfectibility of our nature that we may hope to rise to the proportions of the stature of His fulness, or to develop of ourselves a kind of manhood like Christ's. We cannot escape from what we are by any self-inflicted penance and mortification of the flesh, or by any sacrifices whatever, unless the Life Stream from the Cross pour into us to purify and wash our guilt away.

We must be born of God. Nicodemus asked in

his anxiety, "How can a man be born again?" Can he return a second time to his mother to make a fresh start in the journey of life? What if he could? That would not re-create him. Beginning from the same corrupted fountain again he could not but bear along with him something of its taint, for it must go with him to the end. Oh, how impotent is humanity until it be made anew in Jesus! It may practice some virtues and avoid some vices, but it cannot eradicate the root evil in the heart which depraves more or less whatever we do. There is a natural self that needs to be crucified with Christ, the old man of one's birth, that by a daily mortifying of one's corrupt affections needs to be buried with Him, into the place of which the new man shall be raised up. There is an actual living of Jesus within us that should be realized by us all: a conscious, palpitating, loving life, of which He is the Author and which He controls, a life of faith in His person, which though not consisting of mere enthusiasm, yet shows itself in gratitude, affection and devotion of which He is the Object, and which appropriates to itself at times the words of the Apostle, He "loved *me*, and gave Himself for me." In all high transports of feeling as in all deep convictions of truth, an individuality of relation is claimed by the believer to his Lord. "*My Lord* and *My God*," is the impassioned outburst of

St. Thomas on identifying the person of his Master. "I count all things but loss," is the fervid exclamation of St. Paul on one occasion, "for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord." And as the same Apostle drew near his end, he wrote to Timothy in full prospect of departure, "Henceforth there is laid up for *me* a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing."

Do you recognize, my hearers, this personal relation to yourselves of the Saviour who loved you? Strive for it. Endeavor to make it real. Why, if He gave Himself for each of us, why should we not individually own the fact of it?

Is it not the object of this solemn observance of Lent to impress a sense of our depravity and guilt—that we may seek with the more earnestness to be cleansed from our sins? Is it not to hold communion with Jesus, that we retire with Him more than commonly from the world? Is it not to imitate Him, to be made like unto Him, to imbibe His Spirit, and to prepare for such a commemoration of His Cross and Passion, that we may die with Him unto sin, and rise with Him indeed at Easter unto newness of life?—I ask you, men and brethren, are you attending as you ought to the duties of Lent? Are they no-

thing to you, who seldom or never are present at the Daily Prayer, who make little or no addition to your moments of devotion and your turnings aside from business for reflection and from study for usefulness, when the Church calls you in still and tender accents like the Mother of you all?

Have you been baptized into Christ? Are you confirmed in Him by grace? Are you partakers of that bread which is the Communion of His Body, and of that Cup which is the Communion of His Blood? Can you say, that "the life you now live in the flesh, you live by the faith of the Son of God?" Is it not *you* that *live*, but Christ liveth in you? Do you evince such a life by your likeness to your Head? Does grateful love incite it, and the law and precept of Jesus control and direct it?

If not, how much have you to attempt to accomplish! Oh, how much remains yet to be done! Remember the solemn words of the Scripture, "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." "As the Living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by Me." "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have *no life* in you."

SERMON IX.

SERVANTS OF RIGHT, AND SERVANTS OF CHOICE.

"*For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be the Lord both of the dead and living.*"—ROM. xiv. 7–9.

IN discussing the question how Christian men should treat one another, when honestly divided about matters not definitely settled by the law of God, St. Paul takes the ground, that as every man is responsible to his Maker, he ought not in such matters to be judged by his brother. A sense of accountability, added to an earnest desire to serve and please God—will, in the opinion of the Apostle, be the best possible corrective of all divergencies of sentiment. As on another occasion, so here—he might have suggested to his brethren to look to their points of agreement, and "whereto they had already attained, to walk by the same rule and mind the same thing;" assuring them, that "if in anything they should be otherwise minded," that is, should continue to differ, "God would reveal

even this unto them."—All of which is based upon the simple assumption, that every Christian man belongs to God. He is His servant—he stands at His bar, and for His approval alone has he reason to feel anxiety.

Now in planting himself upon this obvious truth, St. Paul introduces a topic which he touches very lightly. It was not needful for him to consider it in its manifold aspects. He had an object in view, and to that object he confined the range of his observations. But his words are suggestive of a breadth of meaning which covers not only all believing people, but all mankind; and teaches that the latter as well as the former, the one without their consent, the other of course, of free will and choice, live not for themselves and die not for themselves; but under the government of God serve a much larger interest, whether they intend it or not. This subject presents to us two different sides; its side to Godward, and its side toward Man. On the one hand, it exhibits the *Divine appointment* in constituting our place and relations in life, whereby we become a part of that agency by which He does His good pleasure upon earth. Or the other, it reminds us of that *human attainment*, by which it is the privilege of every man living intelligently and consciously to serve his Maker, and not simply to minister as an unwitting instrument. Let us consider them in order.

I. The Divine Appointment. Whether any shall be born into this world, or shall be born at one time rather than another, or in certain circumstances and surroundings rather than their opposite—is a matter wholly independent of them. It is not theirs to determine what relations they shall sustain, or whether they shall sustain any relations at all. We are brought into the world through a domestic bond. We appear in a family, in a condition of society, and that, upon our first entrance into this mortal state—without our choice, without our volition. To circumscribe our position so as to cut off all ties which bind us to another, is out of our power. From the very hour of birth, as I have said, and I may also add, to our latest breath—we find ourselves in a human brotherhood, of which as members we receive and impart, we borrow and give—and from which there is no escape.

God appointed this state for mutual benefit. No person within it can possibly "live for himself" or "die for himself," unless he be perfectly worthless. If any life or death be reduced to a cipher, it is a dreadful perversion. Even the child that comes into being has a beautiful and sacred mission to accomplish, while yet in its infancy. To gladden its parents, to open up new affections, and with them fresh enjoyments, to awaken responsibilities for its care, to enlist them in the tenderest and holiest services that attach

to home in its nurture and training, is the object of our Heavenly Father in its gift. Does it live for itself? And if, perchance, its premature departure raises their thoughts and their prayers to Heaven, and leads them to transfer the idea of home, wholly or in part, to the Paradise of God, and their love from their babe to Him who keeps it safely—will it have died for itself? Will it not have served God both in death and life by blessing its parents? Among the highest ministries to God is the performance of work which tells upon the welfare and improvement of men. The sun which shines in the firmament is a minister in its sphere. It obeys its Maker, by shedding its genial lustre upon dependent mortals; not by casting its bright beams around His Throne or about His path, for which there is no occasion—but over His footstool. "My goods are nothing *unto Thee*," said the Psalmist; the field of their distribution is to "the saints" and "to such as excel in virtue," and to whomsoever has need. Even the angels, who by way of eminence are "ministering spirits" unto God, are sent forth from His presence to "minister *for* them which shall be heirs of salvation."

Now it is the appointment of Almighty God, that human beings shall enter into the several vocations and employments of life, and into those reciprocal bonds by which the world is made happier and better, in

order to advance His benevolent purposes. The various pursuits of earth, down from the ruler of his people to the humblest tiller of the soil, are all ordained. The statesman to guide and govern; the jurist to administer law; the man of science and the artist to enlighten and beautify; the priest at the altar, the physician by the bedside, the merchant at his sales, the mechanic at his craft, and every menial at his work—is the delegated servant of the Almighty in his particular department. And though unconscious of any purpose to act for God, yet each of them does by virtue of his calling really act for Him—and so far forth as his agency goes, promotes His pleasure. And I may go even farther, and claim that all of these, whether designing it or not—do truly live for other people's welfare, and not for their own exclusively. It is hardly possible to conceive, that any one can enter into the active employments of life with the thought absent from his mind that he must live for his neighbor. Thus the sovereign, whatever his selfishness, knows that he must sacrifice his private ease for public interests. Thus also the humblest subject must in his position wait upon his employers; and of that he is cognizant. And so, of those who enter into the holiest bonds, whereby two lives become as one, are fully aware, that with whatever avidity they seek their own, they are bound equally to consult the happiness

of their chosen—to neglect which would be inhuman, not to say unchristian. And from two such lives intertwining with each other, what reciprocal influence for increase of good, for promoting in each the purest love, the tenderest sympathy, and the loftiest aims, for refining in short and elevating their joint companionship, what tongue can tell? Nor from these alone, but from every relation of higher to lower, from ruler to subject, from parent to child, from guide to pupil, and vice versa—from lower to higher, there should emanate much to make better the recipient if he will only heed it. God designs by these channels to subserve a *moral* end. They have not a little to do with giving a religious direction, or at least an upward tendency to human thought and action. If they are turned the other way, they are degraded from the high office to which they were appointed. In whichever light you view this subject, whether that of the relations to which I have called your attention, or that of the influences I have incidentally noticed, the truth of the Scripture must strike you forcibly—"none of us liveth to himself." Nor is it any the less true, "that no man," on the other hand, "dieth to himself," if you will reflect for a moment of the many who perish in the service of their fellows, the philanthropist for the plague-stricken he attempts to relieve, the soldier that bleeds in defence of his country, and the every-day

victims of the dread destroyer, whose deaths, though not connected with vicarious duty, are nevertheless overruled to the arrest of the thoughtless and the impression of the gay—as their remains are carried forth from weeping households and along mournful streets and into the last solemn resting-places that await the living, with the dead, alike.

I am sure there is no such general recognition of a Providence in human affairs as ought to obtain. Men look at Human History, and see a succession of flow and ebb, of advance and retreat, nations flourishing, then perishing, and others succeeding to their place, or in a narrower circle the like picture repeating itself directly under their eyes, and they get an impression adverse to genuine progress. But if they study attentively, and in the light especially of the Word of God, which reveals His providence in the past, and an outline of its prospective plans for the future, they will not fail to discern His hand. There is underneath a scheme, and throughout an achievement that are His. There is no uncertain and fluctuating movement. A wave draws back from the shore, only to make a higher sweep upon its sands. A river makes the detour of a mountain, but only to take in new tributaries from its curve and proceed with larger volume and fuller strength. So the Providence of God, writes Robert Boyle. God has His own wise ends in

every event and every lingering of events. We may not see them, either at the time or afterwards, yet they are real. Every movement in the world has its direction given to it, and its ultimate goal. And though, at first sight, it may seem as if some were too small, too insignificant or too remote to be counted in, it is not to be forgotten that even a pebble thrown into the water will send its circles to the farthest shore, and that a thousand tints go to make up a picture, each one of which is so delicate as hardly to be discernible by itself; and that the completeness and no less the verisimilitude or naturalness of the same is dependent upon the addition of each of these tints.

There are actions and events that *seemingly* are most *opposed* to the will of God and the good of man. Take the conduct of Joseph's brethren, for illustration. They "thought only evil" against the unhappy youth, but God meant for good whatever they did. Without their sale of him into slavery and his forcible removal to Egypt, there would have been no deliverance for them and their father from the famine in an approaching future. Yet they had no look to that. God only foresaw it and used their vicious instrumentality in providing against it. "By the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," Christ was delivered into the power of His enemies, and was by them "with wicked hands crucified and slain." Still they were uncon-

sciously the instruments of a blessing they never expected to procure. Said Jehovah to Pharaoh, in the height of his opposition to the divine command to "let Israel go," "In very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to show in thee my power; and that My Name may be declared throughout all the earth." And wrote St. Jude of certain men unawares crept in, "who were of old *ordained* to this condemnation," and St Peter of others, "which stumbled at the word, being disobedient 'in spirit,' whereunto also they were appointed." It might naturally be asked, in the language of the scoffer reported by St. Paul, "Why doth He yet find fault? For who hath resisted His will?" "Nay, but O man," the apostle rejoins, "who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me so? . . . What if God, willing to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much long suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?" Were not the brethren of Joseph conscience-stricken long years after their crime? And did they not exclaim, "We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear: therefore is this evil come upon us." And were not the Jews at Pentecost, when being charged and convinced that they had crucified their Lord, "pricked in

their hearts," and did they not say unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Men are conscious of their liberty when tempted to do evil, however strong the provocation or blinding the sin. There is a certain limit of freedom within which we move as we will. Nothing is plainer to our consciousness than that we are unfettered and unconstrained. The only fetter is our passion. Our consent is never forced; or if it is, no guilt is ours. Yet it is equally clear that the doctrine of a Providence involves a regard to all our doings, and takes account of them separately as factors and agents in the accomplishment of its purposes. The magnificent plan of History is spread out by God over the world and over time: and taken up into it, from stage to stage, as means for realizing its varied parts and for stepping stones to help on its upward movement are the acts of men, wholly voluntary in their character, which could have been dispensed with and supplied by others, but which for economy of operation are used, because furnished, and are every way sufficient. It is perplexing to attempt an adjustment of human liberty with divine decree. Still there is an adjustment. And while we leave the explanation among things too high for mortal range, we can neither deny our freedom, nor if we accept a Providence, can we withhold our assent to the Scripture and its

broadest import—"Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's," —to rule and to overrule in all the conduct of our earthly way.

II. Let us turn now for a moment to look at the second aspect of this important subject, its side toward Man. I would speak to you of that Human Attainment which it is the privilege of every one of us to make through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, in becoming intelligent, conscious and loving servants of God, and not simply unwitting instruments in His hands. Let me read to you again the last verse of the Text: "For to this end Christ both died and rose, and revived, that He might be the Lord both of the dead and living." Here is the delightful announcement of our recovery by the offices of our Blessed Saviour. "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." There is many a sinner who from his heart exclaims, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" to whom the appropriate answer comes, "Thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Our Elder Brother, sharing our poor humanity, has undertaken to qualify us for a state of sonship to which it has pleased our Father in Heaven to call us. He has removed all obstacles to our return to Him;

He has atoned for our sins, and by breathing His Holy Spirit upon us, and mysteriously imparting of His own nature to us, He has lifted us up to a filial position. This does not mean that He has made us simply His own, by having bought us with a price; but that He has become our Head, our Imitable Pattern, our Animating Leader, and the Giver of power to all that receive Him, to be in heart and in life "the sons of God"—and not only in name, by following faithfully in His steps. I have been impatient to bring before you the beautiful picture and its lesson which the Epistle for to-day introduces to our notice. "Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour." There is in Him the Example of perfect self-abnegation, of neither living to one's self nor dying to one's self—but of living and dying solely for others. From the hour that the Son made His appearance in the world, saying, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God"—to that final prayer offered at the conclusion of His earthly ministry, "Father, I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do"—His life was one unqualified surrender to the Divine appointment. Along its various stages, it was certified to as one commanding the approval of His heavenly Parent. At His Baptism, and later, a

voice was heard from Heaven, "This is my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." It was "His meat to do the will of His Father, and to finish His work." He was supported in this loneliness by His Father's presence, "because He did always such things as pleased Him." He "laid down His life that He might take it again, because this commandment He had received of His Father."

And what were the purposes to which that life was devoted, in obedience to His Father? Were not the sin and misery of man—his unhappy estrangement from his Proper Home—his subjection to an enemy—the illusions that misled him, the pains and penalties that overtook him—his disquietude, his remorse, his inability to help himself—the evils incident to a condition of sin in disease and suffering, in earthly privations and bereavements, and manifold exposures of mortal life—were not these the objects of His constant sympathy? And were not His days spent in poverty to relieve it, and brought perpetually into contact with every form of need and every variety of ill—in order to mitigate their pangs; and when at length, yielding up to violence, and consenting to die an ignominious death, that He might leave nothing undone for human welfare, though the Cross was shrouded in midnight darkness, and though there arose from the Sufferer that inscrutable cry indicative of a

moment of unexpected desertion and spiritual eclipse—yet, even then, the matchless affection and tenderness of Jesus, exhaled, as it were, a celestial fragrance, drawing not only a repenting world to the "*Lifted Up*" for them, but attracting all Heaven to this mystery of Love, and the great Heart of God to fresh union with His Only Son.

This is the Pattern which we are called upon to copy. The power to stimulate us and to enable us to imitate its faultless model proceeds from the Cross. The motive is gratitude. The obligation is salvation by it. "For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be the Lord both of the dead and the living."

In the Name of Jesus, and after His Example, we are to hold ourselves consecrate to duty, and given up to the promotion of the welfare of others. If need be, we must be willing to die for Him. At all events, *self-denial* is bound upon us all for the sake of Humanity and at the order of God. There are difficulties to contend with, there are discouragements to surmount, and temptations to turn aside from the battle with one's self and with the foe. But what watchword should be needed to command both courage and resolution, beyond that of a reminder of the Love of Jesus?

When the soldiers at Lucknow marched into the

open jaws of destruction, the command was issued from the chief of the army, "Fight for the Queen, Fight for the Queen;" and the brave rank and file caught up the inspiriting words, and pushed forward unflinchingly into the danger before them. And yet, as has been asked, what was the Queen to them? What had she done for them? Who had ever seen her, of that army? Who hoped ever to see her, or to be known to her by name, or to receive at her hand the faintest token of acknowledgment? Still there was magic in the mention of their Sovereign, and they bled cheerfully for her, because she was associated with the country they loved and the home and its blessings to which they fondly looked.

But if such be the inspiration of an earthly name, what should be the effect of the remembrance of Him who is King of kings and Lord of lords, who hath loved us personally, and hath given Himself for us—in advance of any demand for giving ourselves to Him—and who, after living in the sole interest of Mankind thirty and three years of lowly endurance, died for them, and was buried and rose again on their behalf, that they through the grave and gate of death might pass to their joyful resurrection when life is over, and be received by Him into Paradise and Heaven.

Draw incitement, my brethren, to ways of obedience and self-denial from the many likenesses of

Christ in His faithful servants; who, in living, have lived for Him, and in dying have died for Him; whose rare fidelity and devotion have been a quickening power to those that have observed them, and whose deaths, not unfrequently in the midst of their usefulness, have startled the Church from her slumbers, and led her to exclaim, "The chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!"—in the seeming untimeliness of removal and the sad void they have left behind; but which she comes to recognize as only in the fruit thereof another illustration of the Scripture, "none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself." Ponder well the difference of being unwitting instruments in the hand of God to do His will, and his intelligent and cordial servants. Many will say to Christ at their reckoning, "Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? And in Thy name done many wonderful works?" To whom He will profess, "I never knew you." Their heartless and selfish agency He has accepted as a means of execution, but He has not accepted themselves. They have helped to carry out His purposes, but not intentionally. Think of the entire contrast of this to that of earnest and affectionate service of Christ.

The conscience of civilization cannot approve the crimes by which oftentimes her advance is furthered. The unrighteous conquests, the base and fraudulent

treaties, the unprincipled commerce and intrusive colonization of mightier power may be used by her, but not commended. She can only thank properly peaceful arts and industries and lofty culture. So Christianity cannot condone, and much less the Lord of Christianity condone, the wretched ambition and self-seeking alms of mortals—but the plaudit is only for those to whom to live is Christ, therefore to die is gain.

SERMON X.

ESAU'S BIRTHRIGHT.

"*Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God. . . as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how, that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance though he sought it carefully with tears.*"—HEB. xii. 15–17.

I HAVE left out a few intermediate words between the opening sentence of this Scripture and what follows, because they are not necessary to a proper understanding of it, and because I would confine your attention this morning to the one ruling idea which it is of first importance that we should discover in this passage of Holy Writ. That ruling idea I take to be this, that there is a promise of Grace, or of special blessing from above, of which we are in danger of coming short. Every one of us should be careful "lest he fail," for any reason, "of the grace of God." And as a member of a body to which others belong, he should be mindful of the interests of fellow-creatures, to see to the extent of his ability and propriety, that no one of them forfeits his boon. The bitter "root" of discord

or misleading example should not be suffered to spring up to the hindrance of any, and to the defilement of souls that have once been washed from their sins. "The fornicator and the profane" should be studiously avoided; the thoughtless and the negligent, no less than the openly wicked, should be cautioned; the man who does not stop to consider what he does, no less than he who deliberately offends, should be warned.

Now of this latter class was Esau, twin brother of Jacob, who was guilty of sacrilege in dishonoring or dis-esteeming a Divine appointment in making him heir to the Promises. It was an ordinance of God, that the first-born to his father, under the patriarchal economy, should inherit his father's distinction as a son of Abraham. This meant that the Church should come of his line, or more correctly speaking, should include his line. He was to be of the succession through whom Christ should appear. His posterity should enjoy the "adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the Law and the service of God," besides special pledges of God's favor and the Advent at last among them of His Only Son. In addition to this, he was to be himself one of the favored of Heaven, in whose seed all the families of the earth should be ultimately blessed.

This honor, however, and this spiritual distinction,

were not Esau's at present: they were to come to him in the future, when it should seem fit for his father Isaac to bless him. And that time came when Isaac was old and his eyes were dim, and he thought that the day of his departure was near; though he lived after that time over 50 or 60 years.

The two boys, Esau and Jacob, grew up after a different fashion. One was a very skilful hunter, fond of roving and adventure, a brave, robust and sinewy person; the other was domestic, a "dweller in tents." His was a youth of sobriety and quiet, while the other was characterized by wildness. One day, returning from the chase, while they were yet in early manhood, Esau, faint for want of food and exhausted by labor, saw his younger, though also twin brother, regaling himself over a mess of pottage, and asked to share it. Jacob took advantage of Esau's request to make a proposition hardly expected by the latter, and one that, in such circumstances, he was not disposed to weigh. "Sell me thy birthright," said Jacob. To the knowledge of Jacob, Esau thought lightly of this gift, or he would not have had the presumption to ask it. Esau, on the other hand, never having prized as he ought this peculiar privilege, and now less in a mood than ever to consider its worth on account of the extremity to which hunger had reduced him, stammers out a lame and shallow apology for himself in

consenting: "Behold I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do for me?" As if he had said, "I shall never live to enjoy it, or to have it made mine by my parent's blessing. I am expiring already. Nothing but food just here will avert my death. I give my future for the present, my far off and unknown and uncertain good for positive gratification now." And so he swore to part with his right. "And Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus," as the historian at the time records, "*despising* his birthright."

Among means of Grace, the Laying on of hands in Confirmation has been always accounted an important one. Confirmation is a supplement or completion of the Office of Baptism. The last, in the appointments of the Church, stands at the beginning of our career, and the first a little way removed, corresponding very much to the relative positions of right by birth to the Promises made to the Fathers and the ratifying of that right by benediction at a later period. As the young patriach looked forward, so the young Christian looks forward to a particular recognition of his favored estate, in receiving the seal of it at paternal hands. Meantime it is his by solemn sacramental covenant. Yet it is *grace* reserved; it is grace yet to be received after a probationary term. It is not so guaranteed

by stipulation, but that it may be forfeited. Hence the appropriateness of the caution, "Lest any man fail"—or come short, "of the grace of God;" lest it be brought within reach almost and yet be lost.

Why this need of Confirmation of a yet earlier gift? Why this necessity for imposing upon the head of the younger the benedictory hands of an older in years, in order to the transmission of a boon, to the inheritance of which he is entitled by something that went before? There is only one answer to this question, that it is so appointed. From the earliest ages, in all lands and tribes, but especially in the land and people of God, the blessing of the fathers upon the offspring and the bestowment of grace upon His ministers through their predecessors in office, have been ordered to descend by this significant medium.

The Christian Church follows in the wake of the preceding Hebrew. It receives little children by Baptism, as before they were received by Circumcision, into the Family of God; and upon their coming to age, it requires them to renew their vows of "their own mouth and consent," and to seek a fresh benison from their Maker through His chosen Servants. It finds for this purpose an Apostolic provision, which has from the time of the apostles been always observed in the Church, that was originally instituted to convey grace to believers, through the high-

est order of the Ministry, and to signify through that the unity of the fold; there being a grace of different degrees varying with differences of administration, as that of a Deacon, who is qualified to baptize; of a Priest, to administer the Communion, and of a Bishop to perform certain peculiar offices, as Ordination and the Laying on of hands. No sooner were the first converts made to the Church, than Apostles were sent forth to investigate their character and to lay their hands upon them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost. And so constant did this practice shortly become, that in the course of a few years it was accounted a principle of the doctrine of Christ, like Repentance and Faith. — "Wherefore, leaving the principles," writes the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews—"leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ—not laying again the foundation of Repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of Baptisms and of Laying on of hands,—of Resurrection of the dead and of eternal judgment"—let us from these stepping-stones rise to higher perfection. The order of these principles do not fail to observe;—it is the order of the Gospel: first Repentance, secondly Faith, thirdly Baptism, fourthly Confirmation, and fifthly and sixthly Immortality and accountability to a final bar—which last are the groundworks on which all religion must stand.

It is true that the original imposition of hands was accompanied by the gift of miraculous powers ; but there is no reason to believe that all the recipients of its blessing were empowered to work miracles, but only so many as were necessary for the demonstration of the reality of the descent of the Spirit, and for the beneficent purposes of the Gospel. Supernatural proofs were then demanded by Christianity. These were specially bestowed, and in connection with them the grace which was still more demanded ; but they ceased after a time, while the grace continued. No first "principles of the doctrine of Christ" could have been made out of a feature of only temporary use.

But seeing then the authority and benefit of Confirmation, have we not reason to assign to it a place in the ordinances of the Gospel, corresponding to that of the covenant of blessing by the hands of the patriarchs ? It ratifies, and in a sense renews the benediction of the Heavenly Washing. It conveys new assurances of good, and fresh bestowals of it from above. It is the act appointed for bringing upon the soul of the now intelligent and believing child a deeper sense of privilege and responsibility to God, and increased tokens of God's love and favor. It is eminently a means of grace to be looked forward to with desire. It marks another stage in spiritual life—in advance of the attainments of life before. It is a turning point, as it

were, in one's moral career, a conversion of his ways not unfrequently, from thoughtlessness to seriousness, from indifference to interest, from the love of the world to the love of God. It brings him, as he approaches it, to reflection. It causes him to think, to resolve, to pray. If he be detained in such a mood, until he comes fully to himself and seizes upon the opportunity to make his calling and election sure, he is grateful ever after; for he comes soon to perceive how vital it was; how very important to his welfare was the necessity of that decision; how very vague and inoperative is the contemplation of duty which can be done at any time; how quickening is the thought of a step definite, positive and to be undertaken directly, which faces one as an angel standing in the way, and says, "You cannot proceed farther without determining the question, whether you will live hereafter for God or not."

A little child, to be sure, is never tempted to barter his birthright—the time has not come for it. He deems it a privilege, while young, to anticipate Confirmation, and he commonly embraces the suggestion of it with a cheerful alacrity. It is the young man or young woman, on whose susceptible natures the gratifications of the world have begun to be felt; who arriving at the hour, or slowly passing the hour, when they ought to become possessed of a religious spirit

and of that promised help which alone can serve them, are deliberately or thoughtlessly moved to postpone, under the plea that worldliness is too strong at present, that they cannot forego the pleasures that entice, that they have but one youth, and must enjoy it; that there is no space just now for the service of religion, that they are not sure after all whether there be much importance attaching to Confirmation, and that to sacrifice actual and immediate fruition for the seemingly uncertain and distant bliss, which they may fail at the last to inherit because of their faults and forfeitures meanwhile—is not a reasonable thing. And, so the young man and young woman pass on to maturer years, when the impulses of youth are too apt to become changed into colder habits, and having once declined, and again and again declined to renew their vows, they find apologies more easy, and ready of suggestion every year that follows, until they come to confront the beautiful privilege with almost perfect indifference as respects themselves.

I am aware, fully aware, that there are other obstacles besides indifference which deter from Confirmation. There is the fear of self and of being guilty of presumption. There is timidity of spirit in view of one's faults, and the dread of bringing a scandal upon the Church by inconsistency and relapse. There is the natural recoil from a course which has been dis-

honored, yea, disgraced, by the unprincipled lives of some who have espoused it, and the consequent doubt of its advantages, however binding the act, or solemn in itself. I feel the force of such objections, and I understand them. But I feel bound to add that they are not in my judgment sufficient to weigh against a practice instituted by God, appointed for the individual soul, and for which that soul is answerable as to the use he makes of it. The effect of such excuses is to blind to the extent of one's guilt and to blunt one's sense of obligation to His Maker, as it is in all cases to impair the benefit which might otherwise be obtained.

For there comes a day for a more thoughtful look at these things. That day came to Esau in advance of the confirmation of his birthright by his father's blessing. He had grown up to manhood, and was past its meridian. He saw his error, and would fain redeem it, though he was not essentially changed. His life, it must be said, was still an unsatisfactory life, and his marriage with women of an idolatrous parentage, whom his wild wandering habits brought him to know, was "a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebecca." Still, by nature or by discipline, he had come to possess many very noble traits. An air of lofty and generous sentiment distinguishes his later history. Contrasted with Jacob his was a far manlier spirit,

though Jacob had a devouter and more pious heart. His was a constitutional strength and greatness, on which, if God's fear and image had been imprinted, he would have borne much more ably than his brother the honor of primogeniture among the sons of the patriarch. Hence, sad as at all times would have been his loss, it is particularly lamentable under existing circumstances. It was aggravated by the brightness of his prospects and the excellence of his abilities and opportunities, of which he had wickedly made sacrifice. Moral men and virtuous men sometimes grow up outside of the communion of the Church. They come not under the formal act of Confirmation and Benediction, though they are not altogether strangers to the blessed influences of the Church, as Esau was not a stranger to the impressions of a pious home. How much of their morality is due to Christian surroundings, no one can tell. But how much holier and more acceptable they would be to God, were they faithful soldiers of Christ, the Gospel leaves us in no manner of doubt. But ordinarily those who decline or make light of the renewal of solemn vows, are not eminently moral, are not patterns of integrity. They are pleasure lovers, they are mammon worshippers, they are devotees at the shrine of the god of this world, perhaps not offensively or conspicuously so, but really. From the day of their carelessly selling their birthright, and lightly

regarding its forfeit, they give rein to indulgence, and decline in the path of principle. Or it may be, they remain almost stationary for years. By-and-bye, some crisis awakens conscience, some sad Providence, or some hour of remorse, or the calming, sobering wisdom of advancing years arouses them. What do they see? That opportunity lost can never be recovered; that privilege once wasted cannot be recalled. There is "no place of repentance," in the sense of a restoration of the past, though it be "sought carefully and with tears." That which has taken place is irrevocable. Life thrown away cannot be spent again; the birthright bartered for a trifle cannot be gotten back. Esau lifted up before his venerable father an exceeding bitter cry, when he saw that his benediction was diverted from his head. "Hast thou but one blessing, my father? Bless me, even me also, O my father;" and the father gave him an inferior blessing, as the Great Head of the Church gives also to the prodigal an inferior blessing, as he returns from the error of his ways and late applies for mercy. It is not the originally intended benison, as it was not for Esau the benediction of his sire to which he had at first a title.

There is a warning for us all in the injunction of the Scripture, "Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." There is a crown laid up. It is provided for all who love the appearing of their

Lord, and prepare to meet Him. It is a crown for each one's individual possession. It may be estranged from its inheritor and appropriated by another. The primogeniture of Esau yielded in favor of Jacob. There are last who outstrip the first, and first that fall behind. The publicans and the harlots went into the Kingdom of God before the priests. Many shall yet come from east and west, from north and south, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of God, while the *children* of the Kingdom shall be cast out. "There shall be weeping," no wonder, but there will not be a "place of repentance, though they seek it carefully and with tears."

There is one who weeps even now, over mortal infatuation. It is He who wept over Jerusalem, and exclaimed, "O that thou hadst known," or couldst know, even to-day the things which belong to thy peace!

"Holy Jesus, grant *us* tears,
Fill us with heart-searching fears,
Ere the hour of doom appears.

"By Thy tears of bitter woe
For Jerusalem below,
Let us not Thy love forego."

SERMON XI.

THE LIFE GIVING POWER OF THE GOSPEL.

"Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."
—ST. JOHN vi. 68.

A REVELATION from the Father of lights is chiefly valuable, because it lays open a way of access to God and of deliverance from ruin. "Immortality was the condition of the Creation, and death," we are told, "came in as a surprise." "In the day thou eatest thou shalt die." Before the commission of sin death was unknown to man; but after its commission it followed, with a cutting off from the Divine Communion and a loss of God's love. Ever since that hour man has bewailed his lot, and has been trying to find out some method of escape from it.

Not simply an encounter with the king of terrors is Death—it is a present dissolution. It is a penalty that has seized on nature even in advance of our final change, and has sown in us the seeds both of spiritual and physical decay. It has introduced discord where there was harmony before, and perverseness where

integrity existed. It has darkened our understandings and depraved our hearts. It has come like an awful shadow between us and the Heavenly Light, in which it was our privilege to see the light, and has made our future uncertain and our prospect hapless. When man looks down into the grave, it is not principally for his ignorance of a life hereafter that he recoils; but it is for his apprehension that this hereafter may be miserable. He feels the truth of the Apostle's saying, "The sting of death is sin." The consciousness of sin it is, and a conviction of accountability for it, that makes the idea of death so fearful.

Never has that people been found in which some belief in a life beyond the present has been wanting. All religions and traditions have taught it. All natural instincts have confirmed it. Philosophy has *doubted*, because it could not *demonstrate* what religions and traditions have taught and natural instinct has confirmed. But what Philosophy demands—the Gospel has come to offer. And as a Revelation of truth, beloved, it has done far more than assure to man a future life: it has shown him how to make life happy, by restoring him to God and neutralizing the elements of moral corruption which are planted in his constitution.

I do not consider those memorable words of St. Paul, "Who hath brought life and immortality to

light through the Gospel," as limited, by any means, to the discovery by our Saviour of a future existence; but as comprehending the far higher and more important disclosure of a redemption from sin and death by our Lord Jesus Christ: as making manifest to the world its Restorer in Him, and unfolding through Him the blessedness of that state to which He promises to introduce His faithful followers.

With this understanding, I am sure, St. Peter deprecated the suggestion of turning away from the Master. When he asked the question, "Lord, to whom shall we go?" and made confession of his faith, "Thou hast the words of eternal life," he looked to Him for the *gift*, and not merely for the *knowledge* of Immortality. He virtually said to his Saviour, "Thou art our Recoverer from ruin and the Bringer to our enjoyment again of the unending happiness we had lost. We come to Thee to regain it, and under Thy leadership and instruction hope at length to possess it. To whom, but unto Thee, shall we apply for so transcendant a blessing."

I wish to speak to you a few words this morning upon the *Life giving power of the Gospel.*

I have taken occasion on a former Sunday to say, that the Gospel is beyond all price as a Revelation of Truth, and that its witness is sufficient and infallible. But I would present another aspect of the text, and one perhaps of more practical import.

And first, Let me evince this life giving power of the Gospel in its discoveries to us as to the how, and the when, Immortality is begun. Do you find that Christianity abounds in revelations of the secrets of another world, that it dwells, like the Koran, on visions of Paradise, or like Paganism or Spiritualism upon the joys and woes of eternity? That it enters into descriptions of the locality of Heaven, and draws vivid pictures of its inhabitants and their pleasures, as if it would engross our interest in contemplation of them, or on the other hand, furnishes minute accounts of the punishments of Hell, with a view to depicting what death is? In this respect is not the contrast striking with heathen mythologies—and may I not add—with those legends and fancies of even Christian teachers, who, forgetting Scriptural reserve, have sought to ravish men's minds with inventions of seraphic bliss or fright them with fiendish torture?

Let me not be understood to deny that such unfoldings are made, but they are not the burden of the Scripture, neither are they frequent or minute.

Christianity does not direct our attention first to a life to come and to the attainment of that life when the present is over, but it directs us primarily to making sure of that life in *this*. Its instructions and revelations are not the mysteries of an Eternity in reserve, but the mysteries of Christ and of His relations to us. They

turn to Jesus our eyes, not to some distant Heaven, and they teach us to seek Immortality in Him, anticipatory to the time of our departure hence, and not in the hope of eventually arriving at a spot where disease and death are unknown.

For Redemption is not a *place* but a *change*. It is not some favored locality hedged bout by seraphim, like the "*tree* of life," but a moral renewal, a recovery of the heart from sin and of the boy from corruption: whose translation to Heaven is only to admit to an unfallen state which shall be in keeping with a sanctified and renovated mind.

To induce lost men to accept their Restorer, and unite themselves to Him in faith and love, sacramentally to seal their vows and prayerfully to keep up their union with Him, this is the aim of Christianity. And the immortal life thus in Him begun is opened out to their view, into and through the darkness that enfolds the grave, that His people might hope, and might prize their privilege, and hold fast to its possession with ever growing fidelity, knowing that in Jesus there is no more death.

The Old Testament Scriptures are almost barren of allusions to a state hereafter: which has given rise to a doubt whether Immortality was revealed at all to lawgiver and prophet—who say very little about it—the better explanation of whose silence is, that they

were *trained* in *comparative*, not *total* ignorance (for the world, as we have seen, has looked always to a Futurity), and under them the faithful were trained to seek salvation in *this life*, and not in another. And that training ensured, the Sun of the Gospel arose with a broader illumination upon the Church, and a far-stretching radiance into the unseen confines of a better world.

What are we told in the Gospel of the gift of Eternal Life? We are told that, "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." We read such Scriptures as these: "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life;" "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the Only True God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." What is it to *know* and to *have* and *be* in Jesus Christ? It is to apprehend Him as the world's Redeemer, and to partake by a new birth of His hidden Spirit, even as by descent of nature we partake of the breath of Adam. It is to be united to Him as a branch to its vine, as a graft to its tree, and a member to the body of which it forms a part—and to draw from Him grace.

Christ has become incarnate, and has offered Himself a sacrifice for sin in the substance of our flesh. He has taken our human nature and made it pure again, that it might become in Him a fountain of

renewing streams, not depraving, and He might impart through it the riches of His divinity.

The Gospel speaks of a Baptism of His people into His death, that by virtue of the latter they might be able to mortify every evil and corrupt affection; of an eating of His body and drinking His blood for their vital nurture, and of a reception from His fulness of grace for grace, that is of grace to reproduce grace corresponding to itself in the hearts of disciples, that as their Lord is, so might be His followers. By all which sayings it is meant to teach us that He is the Spring whence our supplies are drawn, and that because He lives we shall live also.

Suppose one credits these declarations and endeavors to act accordingly, would you say that Immortality with him is yet a thing of the future? Would you not consider that his union with Christ is the beginning already of his Eternal life, and that even death itself can not suspend its enjoyment? He is victor over the tomb before entering into its bondage.

Death and Life are irreconcilable with each other. The Blessed Lord of Life shrank from the embraces of dissolution, it was so contradictory to His nature. The holy Apostle would fain be clothed upon at once, without encountering disembodiment, that mortality might be swallowed up immediately of life. Our Saviour transmuted the state of death into a sleep,

and broke the chain of the destroyer, that His people might be held no longer in confinement. From that day of release death has lost its sting and the grave its victory, and the announcement of Jesus has fallen like music on the ear: "I *am*," not I shall be, "the Resurrection and the Life," and "whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall *never die*." "The hour cometh, yea, and *now* is, in which all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live."

Do not such discoveries of the person and work of Christ and our connection with Him, give a new force to the question of the anxious disciple, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life"?

But in addition to the value of these priceless teachings, there is a reviving efficacy, in the next place, in the very words of Jesus as they come laden from His lips with power. There are certain media of communication between our Saviour and us. We are not saved because He died, nor are we joined to Him because He is spiritually near. Our personal interest in Him is ensured through faith and by the use of means.

For example, we are admitted in the first instance into the visible Church, which is a Garden or Fold, in comparison of the wilderness without—from which it

separates. Christ dwelling in and watching over this Church brings all its members into a privileged circle. It is His Body, through which they participate in Him and become bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh. Take this Church away, and they are denied ordinarily their principal medium of approach to Him, and their chief outward condition of spiritual communion. Its membership, its collective worship, its united prayers, its sacraments and preached Word, are so many instruments of blessing to the faithful soul, and so many connecting links between it and Christ. Deny these to the believer, and how little you have left him for the nurture and support of his higher life.

God appoints in general the administration of ordinances for imparting to His people the benefits of Christ's Redemption ; Baptism, for the remission of sins, Truth preached and read, for quickening and counsel —Prayer, for supplies of grace—and the Holy Communion for commemorating the death of Jesus to our great and endless comfort. But all these appointments depend for their efficacy upon the moral susceptibility of man to receive spiritual good, and this susceptibility very largely depends upon the grace of instruction. "Sanctify them through Thy Truth ; Thy Word is Truth." According as the heart is softened and the mind penetrated and pervaded with words of Wisdom,

will the use of ordinances become profitable to it. For Divine life in the soul will grow in proportion to one's knowledge of Jesus, or prayerful beholding of His image as in a glass—with an intelligent desire to be like Him.

The dear little child receives Christ's Spirit and commands His blessing without the condition of being previously taught; but that blessed Spirit unfolds His presence and brings forth His fruits in after days under Christian enlightenment: which enlightenment denied, there is little improvement.

What progress in holy living, what resemblance to Christ, what aspiration after His image can be had, my brethren, in the absence of His Truth? Imagine a Eucharistic service unaccompanied with a knowledge of the Saviour's person, and unenlivened by His Word and Spirit—and how unmeaning its observance!

The soul must be fed by holy wisdom. Conscience must be instructed, affection and desire must be elicited by their object brought palpably before the mind. A motive must be presented for action and a stimulus to zeal. And these require, as a first condition, the possession of intelligence in things divine, such as is obtained by hearing, reading, marking, and inwardly digesting the Sacred Scriptures. Mary sat at the feet of Jesus and heard His Word, because it was her life. And St. Peter could not bear the thought of turning

away from Him, because He had "the words of *eternal* life."

To whom else could He go for such instruction? What teacher uninspired could have told him the way to Heaven and the love of the Father? Who ever dared to say to fellow-creatures, "Look unto *Me* and be saved," or to promise to weary and heavy laden a rest in himself?—Such is the life-power, the vivifying, sanctifying, renovating grace of the Words of Christ, that they may be said to fold up in themselves an immortal germ and to be the chief instrument of the Spirit to convert and renew.

I am well aware that these Words of Jesus are liable to great abuse. There are men who, because they possess the Gospel, think they are safe in simply holding the treasure, and go no farther.

They are like the Jews to whom our Saviour observed, "Ye search the Scriptures, for *in them* ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me: and ye will not come *unto Me* that ye might have life." Which, as a holy preacher has said, means this; that they trusted in the Scriptures for the gift of life, and would not penetrate through them to the Life Giver, of whom they spake. Just as some people trust in ordinances, trust in their rigid observance of outward rites, or in the rites themselves, without spiritually looking to the Being whom they

represent. There is such a thing as resting in forms. There is also such a thing as resting in the Scriptures. There is a Bibliolatry, or worship of the Bible which is quite as offensive and delusive as any misplaced adoration of Eucharistic emblems. He who is content with either falls short of any spiritual profit from Word or Sacrament; but he whose eye is fixed on Christ, and who discerns His presence in His own appointments, is quickened by the Truth and enlivened by the ordinance in which he draws near to His Lord and Master.

To such an one the Gospel—yea the Church is inestimable. To rob him of the instructions on which he depends—and no less the institutions on which he relies—would be fatal to his hopes. In his despair he would ask, Whither shall I go? To what portion shall I turn? Where shall I find my immortal food—for "Thou only hast the words of Eternal life."

I believe there is one other vivifying element in the Gospel of Christ, to which I must avdert.

I have spoken of the discoveries which the Gospel makes as to how and when Immortality begins, and I have also spoken of the *vital efficacy* of Words of Truth. But is there not an additional power in the fact that such words come from our Saviour's lips? Is there not something in the character of the Person by whom they are spoken, in His friendship to us, in

His being the object of our affection and adoration? Are the sayings of a stranger just the same in our esteem as those of a brother? Do we not prize certain lessons chiefly for their author? Is there no difference between being taught by our mother or sister and being instructed by one indifferent to us?

I believe you will all assent to the force of these questions. They are not irrelevant to our subject. Our Saviour has put Himself into relations of nearness and endearment to His people, that He might attract them powerfully to His service; and that duty might become more inviting and wisdom more welcome for being associated with Himself. To win man back to his Maker, He drew him with the cords of a man and the bands of a brother. He revealed not His Truth by communications of angels, nor simply by prophet and preacher, but He spake it Himself—and that in tones of tenderness and confidence. He stooped as the Truth incarnate from the elevation of Divinity — and came down into the midst of His creatures and talked with them face to face of the mysteries of Wisdom. They heard Him, and sat as eager learners at His footstool—and for His sake they loved also the doctrine He delivered.

And so when believers hear or read the Inspired Record of His instructions, they still think of Him, and

their faith and devotion and love to Him lend a reviving power to every syllable of His Truth.

I am sure it will be quite evident to you all how important is this personal affection to Christ. In the want of it how impaired is the force of His Word. Without it—how much is the Gospel enfeebled—how tame and indifferent it seems! God Almighty, my brethren, has taken fully into account this necessary dependence of interest upon affection; and has accordingly ordered that our first trainings and teachings should be received from our parents, and that dear sympathizing friends should be our sponsors and guides, and that a human ministry should watch around us and assist us. With the same appreciative wisdom He has given us a Saviour in mortal fashion and guise, and has brought to bear the Revelation of Truth, not through our sorrows and fears and doubts, which it serves to quiet, but through grateful attachment also to Him who brings it.

You have heard oftentimes of the necessity of *Faith.* You are familiar with such phrases as these, "Walking by faith," and "living the life of faith on the Son of God." There is no mystery about these phrases.

What is the difference between him who believes and him who does not believe in a Revelation from Heaven? It is this—that the former credits the fact of a Fall and accepts the Biblical explanation of the

origin and entail of sin—which the latter rejects: that the one receives the doctrine of accountability and a Future Life and embraces the accomplished Redemption of the World and the Being who achieved it, by the offering of Himself — which the other calls in question or ignores: that the first repairs to his Deliverer, trustfully, thankfully, ardently, unreservedly, while the last neither values nor acknowledges Him.

It is Faith which draws the sharp line of contrast. Which of them is victor? Which of the two overcomes this world, fleeting and ruinous as it is, and takes hold on Immortality? Is it any other than he who believeth in Jesus and that *He* is the Son of God?

Cultivate, cherish and cling to this Faith, as you would be saved. Credit what the Gospel reveals of your condition and liability: examine for yourselves what is written upon its pages, and go to the Great Teacher with the loving confession upon your lips—"Thou hast the words of Eternal life." Amen.

SERMON XII.

A DEFINITE PURPOSE.

"I therefore so run, not as uncertainly: so fight I, not as one that beateth the air. But I keep under my body and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means when I have preached to others I myself should be a castaway."—I COR. ix. 26, 27.

WE stand to-day, my brethren, looking toward the wilderness. The festivities of the Church are ended for a time. She is putting off her beautiful garments, and preparing once more for the solemnities of Lent. Christian living should become more thoughtful, more subdued and grave. We are let down as it were by a gradual descent from our day of rejoicing, that we may not break abruptly upon the great annual Fast, as too many, in spite of this appointment, are wont to do. The season from Septuagesima forward until Lent begins is a sort of twilight—a softening change from the bright sunshine into the evening shadows. Let us fall in with the wisdom of the Church's arrangement, and take a deliberate view at this point of time of what a Christian Life ought to be, and ought to become to each of us, if not already begun.

Those always, dear friends, who are the most earnest in doing their duty are the most impressed with the importance of a lofty type of devotion. Their sense of its obligation corresponds with the measure of their fidelity. While the great proportion of the Church, satisfy themselves with a very partial service to their Lord, these consider nothing sufficient, nothing commensurate with the requirements of the Cross but an entire and absorbing piety. When St. Paul was preaching the Gospel at his own charge and sacrificing himself for its extension, he wrote to his brethren, saying, "This I do that I might be partaker thereof with you:" as if without sacrifice, he could not be a sharer in the blessings of the faithful. The words of the text indicate the same sentiment. They express on the one hand his apprehension of danger, and on the other his resolute and persistent purpose to escape it. There is an allusion to a usage of the Isthmian Games, where just before the contest it was customary for a herald to announce the conditions of the strife and hold up the prizes to the candidates. St. Paul represents himself as this herald, who, having stated the terms of the Christian combat and urged them upon the attention of believers, points them to the crown of glory for reward. Imagine now the Apostle entering into the lists himself as a competitor, and you appreciate the language before us. "I therefore so

run, not as uncertainly: so fight I, not as one that beateth the air. But I keep under my body and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means when I have preached to others I myself should be a castaway."

Plainly in the view of Paul the Apostle, Religion is a serious and solemn pursuit. He did not engage in it without an aim, nor prosecute it without system, nor hope to accomplish it without self-discipline. How wide is the difference between this type of devotion and that we commonly witness in daily life is too palpable not to impress us. In the most important of all engagements to which a man can be bidden, taking hold of high and eternal interests and giving its color to all he is and does, he proceeds, alas! with indefinite and inconstant steps: he is easily diverted from his object, if object he have, or he performs his stated duties with a perfunctory coldness. This ought not so to be. The recovery of his soul from sin, the conquest through grace of all our selfish and sensual propensities, the renewal of our nature against the league of the flesh, the world, and the devil, the carrying of principle into our daily walks, glorifying God our Saviour by consistent adhesion to His cause and doing good in the world, constant progress in usefulness, constant growth in purity, final victory in death—these exact of the Christian the fullest measure of consecration of which he is capable, and which any

lower standard of duty than that which the Apostle exemplified will hardly suffice to gain.

I have said that Religion with St. Paul was a serious and engrossing work. The text draws out for us the portraiture of this model disciple. It describes the manner in which he engaged in the service of Christ, and holds up to our view some of the details of a picture upon which we shall do well to ponder.

I. In the first place, it shows us that in the Spiritual race of the Apostles there was a definite *purpose*. "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly," that is, with no vague and doubtful end. There are various senses put upon this word "uncertainly," but none of them, it seems to me, is so in keeping with the context as that I have chosen. There was a specific object which the Apostle pursued, upon which he kept his eye and to which in all circumstances he directed his footsteps. No matter where you see him, in synagogue or on shipboard, in the company of philosophers or of a few women by the riverside, in preaching the Gospel or in working as a tent maker, he is in every condition the same zealous Christian and devoted servant of Christ. What effect did this definiteness and singleness of life have upon his spiritual achievement? What effect in other callings has a settled line of action upon the success of the worker? Compare the efficiency of two classes of men, who act with—or without

a definite object in view. The one class is listless, while the other is energetic. The one fritters away its gifts, while the other improves them to very commendable results. Full of life and bravery and hope is the latter, while the former is irresolute and timid. Purpose, dear brethren, is the guiding star of effort—in the absence of it there is no onward movement. The scholar has his purpose; the merchant has his purpose, every order of men from statesmen and rulers to the humblest artisan and menial has a plan before it, which it means to prosecute—so must the Christian. The reason why so little is accomplished in the way of spiritual benefit is the want of system. There is no goal to be reached, and no heroic endeavor to attain it. The Christian moves "uncertainly," directed by accidents and impulses and not by arrangement, like a boat upon the waves which conforms to the motions of the sea, and is destitute of either pilot or rudder. Hence, from opportunities both for obtaining and imparting good, little profit is reaped. Life passes on without material growth. The privileges of the Church, from lack of a sentiment like St. Paul's, feeling that he not already attained, either were already perfect, are essentially wasted. The blessings of the Sanctuary and the Closet are well nigh lost—not being husbanded with a view to improvement, and so being zealously looked after with a pious forethought.

With no pressing forward "for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus," the business and recreation of life are not hallowed by a religious spirit. Earthly engagements divert from a consistent course. Devotion grows intermittent. Christian activity is suspended. A worldly tone predominates. And little better than when he began his career, the believer dies, leaving home and society in no sense profited by his life and conduct.

Would you escape, my brethren, from this unimproving and unapprovable course? Let the mark of Christian perfection and the reward of a crown of life be always before you. Let them enlist your most fervid exertions. Form each day some settled plan of labor. You traverse too wide a sea to depend upon a general and comprehensive project. You must redirect your bark each morning. Every day you live should have its allotted service, varying perhaps with your peculiar circumstances. Be observant of its duties, its responsibilities, its perils. Determine as early as you awake upon some good action, resolve to prevent some form of sin. Propose to yourselves greater diligence and usefulness in the employment of time. Aim at glorifying God by unspottedness from the world, and at following in the steps of Jesus by going about to do good. Let this your purpose precede you in the way. It shall enlist your interest, it

shall awaken your aspirations, it shall prosper your undertaking: it shall save you from the consequences of "running uncertainly," or to no worthy purpose in this very brief and yet accountable state.

II. In the next place, beloved, the Spiritual Race of the Apostle was marked by an intelligent apprehension of the difficulties he had to meet with. "So fight I, not as one that beateth the air."

The figure is changed, you perceive, from that of a runner in the stadium to the pugilist or wrestler. Before offering one's self for this species of trial, it was the habit of candidates to exercise themselves in a sort of mock struggle, in which they fought their own shadows, throwing their arms at random and beating the air as an enemy. But the text intimates that for the Christian warrior there is no space for this imaginary fight. He is thrown at once into the severe reality of the arena. Every energy is roused, and every muscle and nerve is forced into service to enable the contending athlete to do his duty. The reason why the holy Apostle was in earnest was because he was mindful of his formidable foes. He saw them about him on every side, at every step. Worldly men are apt to think of religion as a mental repose, but though there be calm and quiet, it is calm after storm and quiet after contest. The world is not the place for a Christian's rest. "Blessed are the *dead* who die in the Lord, for

they rest from their labors;" but the true attitude of the living is militant while here.

That quaint old writer, who painted allegorically the Progress of the Pilgrim Saint drew a picture much nearer to the life than those imagine who never trod the path. There is a spiritual conflict none the less real because invisible; "for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against spiritual wickedness in high places;" while, in addition to enemies of this description, there is inordinate desire that calls for control, insensibility and coldness that need to be quickened, and untoward influences in thoughtless companionships, dissipations and enticements which require to be met courageously and resisted. Can any thing short of real earnestness of spirit suffice for this struggle? He who addresses himself to this warfare, "as one that beateth the air," that is without an intelligent apprehension of the difficulties before him, and neglects to equip himself with corresponding care, accomplishes nothing. Insensible to the fact that he is beset by foes, or acknowledging only with his lips that he renounces the world, the flesh and the devil, while he is inwardly conscious of no active resistance, he achieves no victory. His religion is nought but a "seeming to be religious," without the bridle of restraint or the discipline of self. We must be aware of our hindrances, or we shall come

lamentably short of our duty. We must go under the distinct impression of our need to furnish ourselves from the armory of God, like those who know how dependent they are on help. We must prize the opportunities of prayer: we must turn to the blessed Saviour in Word and Sacrament, as creatures who cannot dispense with His presence and succor. In this spirit we shall conquer. But unearnest and unarmed, we shall fall into temptations and a snare, without the power to withstand them; and we shall come at last to our end loaded with inconsistencies, and what is worse, undreaming of the danger in which we are involved.

In the third and last place, the Religion of St. Paul was conspicuous for Self-denial, the Discipline of the man for the better performance of his work. "I keep under my body and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means when I have preached to others I myself should be a castaway." Literally, the meaning of the Apostle is this:—Instead of "beating the air," I turn upon myself and batter and bruise my own body severely. This is the import of the language used. I must remind you again of the Isthmian athletes; who previously to the games subjected themselves to a course of physical training—a course very rigid and hard to endure—yet so imperatively necessary that there was no success without it. The design of

this training was to disencumber the flesh of all its grossness and to tend to ease and freeness in every movement. The Apostle exhorts his brethren by the example of the players to lay aside every weight, to be temperate in all things, and sets them a pattern in himself of bringing under the body. He "fasted often," we are told. He took pleasure in "distresses and persecutions for Christ's sake," which had a tendency to mortify self—"the power of Christ," thus resting upon him. As one who strives for mastery, he sought always to strive *lawfully*, and to conform his course to strict regulation and rule.

The particular reason why self-denial is required is that the enemies to be conquered are appetites for the most part through which temptations gain power. It is very evident, beloved, if the flesh be not subdued, the believer by indulgence thwarts his own struggles; for he suffers license in one way to what he would conquer in another. He gives nourishment to the enemy whose assaults he would resist. He creates the very foe with which he must do battle.

By the "body," however, is not merely intended our animal nature, but whatever we possess in faculty or gift that in any sense hinders our spiritual life. "If thy hand or thy foot offend thee," says our Saviour, "cut them off and cast them from thee." The "hand" is a very useful member, and the "foot" is indispen-

sable in its place. Yet if they occasion sin, if thy *foot* run to evil and thy *hand* do deeds of violence—"it were better," adds the Master, to enter maimed into life "rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire." So, "if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out." If thou canst not control its gaze—but it defies thy power, and proves a snare, forego its loss. The principle is this, that it is the dictate of wisdom to dispense with things which tempt to evil, or minister to it, rather than to jeopard the soul.

There is nothing more becoming to a man than diligence in business, if a lawful business. It is an injunction of the Scripture. But suppose that its weight of anxieties unfits for prayer. Suppose that it takes off attention from sacred duties, denies to Sunday its rest, the hour of prayer its claim, and attaches to the world so strongly as to indispose to the thought and belief of another; its excess is sinful. It calls for abridgment. It must be curtailed and brought into subjection to the demands of the spirit, or the soul must suffer. In like manner, if pastime prove a hindrance to grace, either from its kind or degree—it must yield to discipline. If the gain of money or its quiet possession stand sentinel at the door against the appeal of want, and begrudge to charity and the call of God their generous dues—it must cease to be, or destroy the steward. Nothing that militates against a

Christian career ought to find countenance with a good man or woman. Is it any wonder, my brethren, that those are "sore let and hindered in running the race set before them," whose souls cleave to the dust and cannot lift themselves up for the pressure upon them? Do they not divide their own forces by tampering with temptation? Do they not entangle their feet in nets of their own devising—do they not set snares for themselves? They aggravate their difficulties without reason, and their discouragements by manifest folly. As if the warfare to be waged were not arduous enough for poor human nature, they make it harder. We must deny ourselves. The command of our Master is, "Take up thy Cross and follow Me." This is the very essence of devotion to Him, the sacrifice of self. Religion has its pleasures, but it has its trials. We must bring to its service every power we possess, and "looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, we must run with patience" and perseverance to the end, definite in aim, systematic in effort, earnest and self-denying in spirit; the style of St. Paul must be the type we copy. If the holy Apostle with all his zeal and discipline could entertain a fear of his final acceptance, if he thought the herald who announced the prize and led on the race could eventually fail of being approved—how much more may we who follow with tardy step weigh well the danger.

SERMON XIII.

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

"*And His disciples asked Him, 'What might this parable be?'*"—ST. LUKE viii. 9.

THE first extended parable that finds record, my brethren, among the sayings of Jesus, is that of the SOWER. Its form is so simple and its interpretation so obvious, our Lord expresses His surprise that His disciples did not comprehend it. "Know ye not *this* parable? And how then, will ye know all parables?"

The popular idea of this form of instruction, that it was chosen to simplify and also to impress the Truth, is only a partial one. Foremost among the objects of the Great Teacher in its use was to withhold knowledge from indifferent hearers, while He placed in their hands its treasure, locked up in a casket, that they must open and examine with care if they would know its contents. "That seeing they might not see," in their insensibility to its worth, "and hearing, they might not understand," in their unconcern about it.

There is a great truth which underlies this state-

ment. All the words of Divine Wisdom require to be appreciated in order to be truly known. The Gospel is a record which calls for searching. Its revelations of doctrine and precept are never so plain, that the human mind can dispense with careful attention to their meaning in order to find it out. Truth in the Bible is like truth in science. It proceeds from the same Author of all intelligence, and concerns His works in the one department of Grace which Science explores in the other of Nature. No rich unfoldings of its hidden import are made to men who are content to explore it only on the surface.

"If thou criest after knowledge and liftest up thy voice for understanding, if thou seekest her as silver and searchest for her as for hid treasure, then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God." These are the words of a very competent witness, the wisest of the sons of men. And our Saviour enjoins, "Search the Scriptures," and inculcates the importance of taking heed to the *manner* in which we listen to their lesson, because the benefit may be lost which an earnest study might secure.

If God had meant that His Word should be patent, lying in all cases "on the surface of things," why should so "many things" difficult "to be understood" be found in its Scriptures, and why from the Blessed

Master should men have turned away, while He was teaching on the earth, with the captious objection, "This is a hard saying, who can hear it?" It is not the design of God to supersede either the exercise of our faculties or the banishment of our prejudices, when called to receive His Truth. The work and greatness of the disclosure require a reverent acceptance of it. If men do not manifest interest enough to listen with patience and candidly to consider, they do not deserve the instruction that should make them wise. The mystery of the kingdom of God is too sacred for them. It is revealed imperfectly. They can unveil it still farther, or the Master can unveil it for them if properly applied to, but the curtain is there, to test their desire to have it wholly drawn aside.

And there is something worthy of observation in the method, by which this partial concealment from unworthy hearers is brought about, because it serves at the same time to enlarge the discovery to worthy hearers of that which was hidden when the time comes for perceiving it. It is of the nature of a parable, so long to withhold the Truth, that upon the final penetration of its secret it shall burst upon the view with a marvellous power of illumination. The teaching, disguised for a season under this cover, borrows wonderful elucidation from it, as soon as it

is seen. Hence, the Parable of the Sower, and every other parable of our Blessed Lord, serves so strikingly to illustrate and enforce His meaning, that one is to-day filled with astonishment at the blindness of those who failed to discover it at the moment. Hence, in the parable of Nathan, employed by that prophet in his reproof of David, the temporary disguise of his purpose gave it a four-fold intensity when perceived. The monarch was kept back just sufficiently long from suspecting the drift, to be put into a candid and susceptible condition to feel the full force of the representation which at length broke upon his sight.

Parables, properly speaking, are similes or figurative exhibitions of truth under material forms. They differ from *fables* (which have been known in common use from the earliest ages), in that they are founded on *facts*, and not on *fancies*, and that the *subjects* of which they treat are of a high and un-earthly kind: "fables being devised," says Archdeacon Trench, "for setting forth the lesson of worldly wisdom, and parables of Divine."

The Parable of the Sower furnishes a peculiarly happy example of this species of instruction, because its spiritual interpretation is given by Christ Himself.

I have said that it is the first extended parable which is recorded in the Gospel. According to St. Matthew's account, it was part of a discourse made up

of similar teachings. It is somewhat remarkable, that while three of the Evangelists sprinkle over their pages with recitals like these, only a single parable is recounted by the fourth, and not another by any after writer in the New Testament volume. St. John supplements what he found put into writing in the Synoptical Gospels—the Gospels so called, because they bring together all parts alike of our Saviour's life. He presents to us many discourses of our Divine Lord, the profoundest in their kind, and highly figurative often, but never parabolic except in a single instance—showing us a fact of some importance to know, that our Saviour changed His manner—according to the circumstances under which He taught.

It is quite reasonable, brethren, to suppose, that on the occasion in which the Parable of the Sower was propounded, there was a marked peculiarity in the character of the audience. All that was said upon that occasion was spoken, we are told, "in parables, and without a parable," nothing whatever was delivered.

There are two other occasions in Christ's life in which He abounded in this form of speech; one of them in the midst of his ministry, in Galilee, when the "Lost Sheep," the "Piece of Silver," the "Prodigal Son," and the "Unjust Steward," were symbolically employed by Him for the communication of His

thought, and the other in Jerusalem just before His death, when He related the story of the Ten Virgins at the Marriage Feast and the account of the Talents, with many like narratives.

St. Matthew's explanation of His exclusive resort to parables while addressing the crowd by the seaside was His intention of a present concealment from them. But St. Mark observes, that He spake the Truth in parables at that time "as they were able to bear it." From which it would appear that the multitude was a mixed one, part of it heedless, and part of it unprepared for larger instruction. To the "heedless," of course, He uttered "dark sayings." To the unprepared, on the other hand, He spared the multiplication of his figurative lessons, lest their number should confuse them, rather than assist their understanding; or He dealt out the Truth under these striking similes as they were able to receive it.

Let us imagine the scene of our Saviour and His hearers around Him, by the green margin on the Lake of Galilee.

It was in the month of October, according to the harmonists. The winter grain was being planted by the husbandman; and very probably a sower in full view of His audience was scattering the seed of the vernal harvest, when our Saviour seizes the incident in illustration of His doctrine. Most fitly does He

begin His discourse to the people by reminding them of the different effects of the Truth, and the different degrees of receptivity for it in the hearts of those to whom it is addressed. The incident was calculated to engage their attention. The design of the Master in parabolical teachings was to awaken an interest in what He was about to say.

Now the Parable of the Sower demonstrates in the first place the *Power* of Truth.

Truth is a seed. It has the germinal properties of the grain sown in the ground. There is a secret and invisible force within it. In the tiny seed of the field, whether of plant or tree, is wrapped up the perpetuated life of the vegetation from which it sprang. The vitality of the stock of the first products of the soil is propagated and preserved by the medium of its seed down to the latest generation.

You take the seed into your hand. It is a small and inappreciable thing. You look at it. There are no signs of life; you lay it by in your garner; but it continues the same from day to day. No change passes upon it. You can destroy it with the tread of your foot, perhaps with the pressure of your finger. Yet locked up in the heart of it—beneath its scales and its lobes is a principle of life, which can expand into the growth of a gigantic oak, or can multiply shortly into a handful of grass that shall multiply in its turn into

broad acres of pasturage. Such a power is secreted in a little vegetable matter, vitality in every part of it, elements of vigor everywhere about it, converting it into a quick and quickening agent. And this is the description that applies also to the Word of Truth. It is "quick and powerful." If compared to a sword, it is "sharper than a two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow;" penetrating with its subtle might into inaccessible regions and laying open "the very thoughts and intents of the heart." If compared to the *rain and snow* coming down from heaven and watering the earth, making it to bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater—not more certainly do they accomplish their mission than does the Word that goeth forth out of the mouth of God. "It shall not return to Him void, but it shall accomplish the thing which He pleases, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto He sent it."

A more suitable emblem could hardly be chosen to express in one word both power of penetration and infallibility of result, because under fitting conditions the seed has both the force of the sword to probe, and the virtue of the rain to fertilize. Its tender shoots will make their way through obstructions almost impervious, and still thrive. With a patient and quiet persistency they will find out a passage through the

hardest soil, and emerge into the light with a slow, but certain step.

In like potentiality of Truth, in like actual though latent power, under proper conditions, belonging to the Word, lies the secret, no doubt, of its being presented in *Parables*, where it was not designed to be effective upon indifferent hearers. It is implied in the Scripture, that there was a prospect that the Word would tell convertingly upon human souls, if it once gained a lodgment in them. Its Author and Giver would not therefore impart it, in its simple strength, lest the unearnest and unworthy should enjoy its benefit—without making on their part a suitable effort to obtain it.

Now Language, dear brethren, in order to be interpreted aright, must be looked at in connection with the circumstances under which it was spoken. The multitude about our Saviour whom He admonished of the danger of seeing and not perceiving, and of hearing and not understanding, had doubtless heard Him on many former occasions when He used great plainness and simplicity of speech. For now, nearly a year and a half, He had gone about their villages "preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom" in clear and intelligent terms. His instructions began with the Sermon on the Mount, which was plain and didactic throughout. His auditors were not likely at that

earlier day to deserve the reproof of being taught in *parables*, for the reason that to know the deep mysteries of the Gospel was not then granted, for their apathy or opposition. But they stood, at that hour, like Israel under the Mount of Commandments, by the doorway of a New Celestial Covenant, and needed, like Israel, to be taught distinctly their duty.

But when, in process of time, they had become familiar with their Teacher, and they flocked to His side for curiosity more than profit, and listened to His words of parable and precept like the pleasant entertainment of an idle hour, or bore with them only as the unavoidable penalty of being witness to His miracles, or made a merit of hearing, or thought to be profited by the mere act of listening—or, what was far worse, and yet not uncommon, to seize upon His sayings for sinister designs,—*then* He began to speak to them in parables, and without a parable, He said nothing unto them, that the Sword of the Spirit might be blunted in its edge, and the power of His Truth might fail of being felt in blessings of grace, upon disobedient and gainsaying hearers.

In the next place, the Parable of the Sower discloses to us the conditions on which the Word is made efficient in its action upon human souls.

(a) It must obtain an entrance before it can become effective. The seed that fell upon the hard trodden

wayside could not take root in its earth. And the Truth that lodges only in the ear in the shape of articulate sounds, does not tell upon the heart. An act of the understanding is necessary at the outset to give it admission. One must think in order to receive it. It must introduce into his mind some intelligible idea. The Truth which is not put into definite form by the hearer, is of necessity, not admitted either to the court of reason, or to the court of feeling. And this is the case with very much that is dropped from the lips of the preacher. It is to be feared, that in every Christian congregation a great deal of what is heard both from the pulpit and the desk leaves no distinct impression upon many who are present. It is dismissed with the sound of it, without the attempt to ponder it. Many attendants on the Church, after listening constantly to the preached Gospel with what may be called "the hearing of the ear," and knowing from their childhood the testimony of the Creeds, the Scriptures and the Prayers, have no conception whatever of the doctrines and institutions of the Fold they belong to, because they do not take heed to what they hear and know. As well might the entire Revelation of the Faith have been given in parables, as a few sayings of Christ, so far as respects their definite apprehension of the same.

This kind of hearing makes forfeit of the benefit

which the Word was intended to dispense. The spiritual effects of it are lost. As a bird snatches up from the footpath the seed that lies upon it, so the devil taketh away the Word from its recipient by causing it to be forgotten as soon as gained, lest recalling it afterwards or conning it at the time, might prepare for it a lodgment and cause it to take strong hold upon its possessor's mind.

Again, the Word, in order to be effectual, must not be superficially and impulsively regarded. The grain which fell into a light and shallow soil, overlying a rock, was soon quickened into life by the penetrating heat of the sun, acting on the rock below; but the very warmth it experienced and which hastened its growth, brought it earlier to decline. A religion of feeling lasts only while emotion or interest is lively; it mounts up like a flame in the ardor of its being, but it sinks as rapidly afterwards if there be nothing more than feeling to sustain it. That the seed of the Word, if it gets into the hearer, should arouse his conscience or bestir his sensibility, is a matter of course. Like the kernel when planted, it is quick and enlivening. It can hardly do less than act powerfully for a time. But if it pierce no deeper, if the measure of receptivity is limited to a susceptibility of brief excitement, it will end as it began, "a morning cloud or early dew."

A religion of sentiment is not, of necessity, a religion

of principle. That the heart should be moved and the conscience aroused, is one step toward the spiritual productiveness of Truth; but it is only one step. Sensibility to impression is one of the shallowest of the signs of grace. As the strings of an instrument of music vibrate readily to the touch, or answer quickly to the breath of a whispering wind that passes over them, so man's moral nature responds promptly when appealed to, to the call of religion. But a temporary awakening of our better self is not a conversion. A transient experience of desire for good under the promises of the Gospel, or a drawing back from sin under the terrors of the Law, is not a radical renovation. It may dispose to that end, it may be meant for that purpose, but it will not accomplish it if suffered to subside in the sequel. What is wanted is a serious retention of such impressions as this, until deeper elements in our nature are reached by the same and thoroughly controlled.

But once more, the Word of Grace, in order to be productive, must be relieved of embarrassment from rival and hostile occupants that divide with it the heart. The seed sown among thorns was entangled and dwarfed by its surroundings, and its crowded shoots shot up their sickly blades, unable to bring any fruit to perfection on account of the exhaustion of that soil by others, which should have lent its nourishment

to them. So, "The Truth as it is in Jesus" is received often times into a mind divided—which the "cares of the World," that are thought to be unavoidable—distract in its devotions, and the lingerings of the flesh, in the shape of greed of gains, and the lusts of pleasure—things that impose upon the sense—either disqualify for the service of God or leave to it no space for calm and earnest duty. There is an antagonism as well as an oppression in such a strange mixture of opposites. There is a struggle of conflicting powers, conscience and inclination, the new man and the old, the Spirit and the Flesh. The subject of it can hardly make up his mind to sacrifice every thing to duty—and so, he wavereth like a wave of the sea; he is unstable, and therefore never advances; he is torn and rent asunder, and has accordingly no solid peace. He does not gradually let go his endeavors, like the transiently moved, but his prayers are rendered unprofitable by the blowing about of his desires with every breeze of excitement, his communions are interrupted by a prevailing unfitness for them, his readings and hearings of Truth are distracted by wandering thoughts and by intrusive cares; his self-discipline is frustrated by worldliness, his intentions of doing good are defeated for want of taking time to fulfil them, his example is marred by inconsistency, his aspiration upward is dragged perpetually down;

he lives continually in hope and resolution for the future, when the severity of age or the thoughtfulness of a sickness shall break the charm of the world and unloose its burdens—but too often, alas! he dies in the midst of his career of activity, an unprofitable and an unprofited servant.

Now, as the only result the Sower comtemplates with satisfaction is the *fruit* of his labors, so, in the eye of the Great Author and Dispenser of grace, "fruit" only is valued and anxiously looked for in the recipients of His nurture. Not the Word utterly lost alone by dropping on the pathway, but that which disappoints by its evanescent effects, or by running to waste — that occasions disquietude to the Heavenly Husbandman. Fruit ripening into maturity and perfection is what is aimed at in the tillage of the Church. As therefore, the *roadside*, the *shallow* soil and the *thorny-ground* hearers—the first for insensibility, the second, though impressible, for not holding out, and the third, though impressible and also persevering, for accomplishing nothing of importance—are all of them displeasing, there remains but one class which is acceptable to God; and that is described by our Saviour as made up of those, "who, in an honest and good heart, having heard the Word, keep it, and—bring forth fruit with patience; some thirty fold, some sixty, and some an hundred."

The chief distinction of this class is, in contrast with the first named, docility; with the second, stability, with the third, singleness and consistency of aim. It brings forth fruit with "patience." It adds the decision of the will to the impulse of feeling, and rests content with nothing short of realizing in itself the legitimate operations of Grace upon an open and guileless breast.

O, how instructive, brethren, is every feature of this Parable of the Sower! How admonitory is the lesson it teaches of "taking heed HOW we hear! "With what measure ye meet, it shall be measured to you again." That is, in proportion as you understand and improve, as you intelligently apprehend and profitably lay to heart the teaching you receive, it shall be dealt to you again. If you make a right use of what you possess, there shall be added to it more. A comprehension of one Scripture prepares you to comprehend another. One degree of improvement proves the stepping stone to a second. Light attracts light, and grace, grace. "The earth, which *drinketh in* the rain that cometh oft upon it, and *bringeth forth herbs,* meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God, but that which *beareth thorns and briars* is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing."

"Take heed how ye hear." You may be "forever

learning," occupying the seats of the pupils of Wisdom, and "never come to a knowledge of the Truth." Wisdom doth not reveal herself to the idle waiters at her gates. Truth may not be seen as it is by the thoughtless crowd. It is not listening to its voice, but "receiving the Truth in the love of it" into the soul, that makes one wise.

Can you wonder, if you pause for a moment to reflect, at the concern of the Spiritual husbandman for the success of his sowing, when, after dispensing with what fidelity he can the seed of the kingdom, a diverting strain from the organ, an encounter of friends and companions at the door, and a careless conversation about worldly interests, will scatter to the winds the Word that has been read and preached, however impressively? When, if the Word has taken effect, ever so thoroughly, as to break up the inward fountains of grief at the recollection of sin, and to an embrace of Christ's feet with a Magdalen's love,—some counter excitement may supervene in its turn to make one fickle and changeful like a wind-shaken reed—or, if deeper still implanted, and radically settled and fixed, the incessant businesses and pastimes, and ambitions and honors, and gains and losses of this passing world may rob it altogether of any due development, to the honor of God and the renewal of the soul.

SERMON XIV.

CHARITY.

"*And above all these things put on Charity, which is the bond of perfectness.*"—COL. iii. 14.

IF there be a lesson that more fitly than any other may be taught us on the eve of Lent, a lesson, in whose light we may examine ourselves for the past, and on whose basis we should attempt in the future the work of amendment, it is the lesson of Charity. Particularly, as this Charity, when rightly viewed, covers the whole circle of relationship in which we stand, involving faith in the Cross, and proceeding out of love to God to love for man.

The Apostle represents it as a garment to be put over all other graces, to make the character complete. Or his figure, perhaps, is that of a girdle which holds the flowing robes beneath it in their place and gives symmetry and finish to an otherwise loosely fitting apparel. You observe the order of his exhortation. "Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of

mind, meekness, long-suffering" . . . "above all" which, invest yourselves with Charity — "the bond" of the full clothed and perfect Christian. But turn now to the beautiful delineation of this single virtue as it is drawn by the pen of the same inspired teacher, in which Charity is set forth as comprehending in *itself all the virtues*—and not simply as one of them, clasping them about with its larger embrace and enfolding them together in one faultless whole. Other virtues are spoken of here as characteristics of charity—its traits—its parts—and not as in the context of the passage I have chosen for our consideration to-day, — wholly independent and separate qualities.

Why this difference in these two very unlike accounts? Are they consistent the one with the other? How can their agreement be made to appear?

That there is no *real*, but only a seeming difference, and that they are perfectly consistent with each other, is evident from the fact, that they both have been furnished by the same infallible Wisdom: but the agreement between them must be obvious, if we pause only for a moment to reflect that Charity is the root out of which other graces must spring, and though kindness, humility, long-suffering and forgiveness, regarded by themselves, are each of them *fruits* quite distinct from the germ from which they

take their birth, yet over them all must be diffused the common fragance of Love, to show their common origin in Christ, and make them truly acceptable in the sight of God through Him.

It is first of all to be noted, dear brethren, that Charity is a sentiment. It is not some single act of beneficence, nor any number of acts of beneficence, but it is a prevailing disposition. More than an affection, which may come and go, which, lively to-day, may be torpid to-morrow; it is the whole inward being habitually obedient to the law of Grace:—a thorough or growing reception into one's self of a better spirit than our own, to the expulsion of selfishness, and the taking into its place of the mind of Jesus.

If we would know what true Charity is, we must look at it in the Incarnate Word. For He was Divine Love itself manifest in the flesh. He taught us by example how to turn the perfect inward sentiment into corresponding acts — going about as He did "doing good," and doing all His works "with charity." HIS miracles, *His* prophecies, His superhuman instructions, His impoverishment of Himself that He might make many rich, were all of them prompted by the pure spirit of LOVE. *We* may work miracles by His help, speak with tongues and prophesy, strip ourselves of our goods for the poor, and consent to

martyrdom for the faith—and yet be self-flattered by the incense of our own fair deeds, which no mercy incites nor love to God pervades. We may perform all our doings, even in the sphere of Religion, in the absence of Charity.

What do we particularly learn from the inspired witness as to the character of this commending virtue?

We learn, in the first place, the prevailing element of self-denial that abounds in its composition. Turn we, whether to the pattern of our Saviour or to that gem of descriptions in which Charity is so graphically and strikingly portrayed, and the impression is one and the same. Christian love must suffer long and be kind, for it has human infirmity to contend with. Its unenvying eye, and unvaunting spirit must commend it on the one hand, to those whose happier condition it cannot enjoy, and on the other, to the lowly to whom it must stoop without affectation, and from whom it should studiously hide any marks of superiority. Charity must not be proud, "puffed" up with a sense of its pre-eminent rank on account of position or attainment. It must not cause offence by unseemly display. No self-seeking aim must appertain to it, no easy provocation, no quickness to take affront, no suspicion, no thought of evil, nor study of revenge, no willing and open ear for slanderous report, no rejoicing in iniquitous aspersion of the good name of another, even of

an enemy, but a rejoicing in truth, and justice. A bearing of all things, even as the original Scripture implies, without seeking to tell of it; a silent submission to one's trial, is characteristic of Charity; a believing of all things that it is possible to believe in favor of him who demands our forbearance, a hoping for the best and an enduring to the last are indispensable qualities. From all of which it will be seen that the great virtue in question is distinguishedly one that works under grievous difficulties for the present, on account of the untoward elements in which it finds its place.

It is not a love which flows peacefully forth like a river, without a check to its course. It has not objects that delightfully win it and never repel it, that command its affection without any effort on its own part to keep up its glow, but on the contrary, objects that so often chill the genial warmth of its blood, that it is often very difficult to survive the shock.

The Divinity of Christian Love is proved by the measure of its resistance to things that would destroy it. What is it, my brethren, that evinces the true nature of a mother's affection? What demonstrates the power of a woman's tenderness and devotion in any relation? What but her patience under discouragements and her endurance through a long "fight of afflictions?" Love in no sphere whatever is without its trials, to meet which successfully God has

given His grace, the degree and right use of which are the best possible evidence of its coming from Him.

Now there is this peculiarity in Christian affection, that it translates into general society something of the characteristic ties of kinship and realizes in the wider circle of the world a family bond and claim. It recognizes a brother in every man it meets with. Children of its Father in heaven, it sees upon every side; and though strangers to His love, prodigals wandering from His care, it does not forget that the Elder Son of the Highest came to seek them as lost, and to bring them back once more to the privilege of adoption. If they return, mutual sympathy and fellow feeling unite them in His household. If they still linger in their outcast condition, the true spirit of a follower of Christ will show itself in forbearance after His example, and in sentiments of regard for their welfare and kindliness toward their persons.

You remember the old Hebrew tradition touching the conduct on one occasion of the patriarch Abraham, who, observing that a stranger he had admitted to the hospitalities of his tent asked no blessing of God upon his food, drove him impatiently from his door as an ingrate and an atheist. But the Almighty reproved him. Have I borne for so many weary years with the impiety of thy guest, and couldest not thou endure it for a single meal? And the venerable father of the

faithful took the lesson in meekness and called back the traveller.

There is no true love, I repeat it, which does not involve self-sacrifice. Easy and unprompted affection, that is elicited by the mere force of nature and the attractiveness of the character on which it rests, does not rise to the proportions of holy charity. It is neither the love of God nor of Angels, much less is it the sentiment that is demanded of Man. Even the holiest and happiest beings, that act as our ministering spirits in the way to celestial good, are pained by our deficiencies, fallings down and fallings away, and the Blessed Comforter Himself is grieved by our misconduct. How much more must inhabitants of earth be tried in their love one to another by their many mutual faults and their "often infirmities."

To give to this subject a practical direction, let this temper be manifest in the household, in society, in business, amid the annoyances and vexations to which they may put you, and let it prevail over their every provocation. It will be very hard in such circumstances to come off victorious in all cases. The jars and jealousies and serious misunderstandings and partisan strifes and divisions that thrust themselves at times into the most sacred arenas, and set family against family, and even members of Christ against members of Christ—oh! what a spectacle they pre-

sent of the lingerings of the flesh that grace has failed to subdue! What a shock to heaven such scenes! What a scandal upon the name of Jesus! Is there any apology, is there any sufficient excuse for such censurable conduct? No, never; but the lamentable occasion of it all is that men have not sufficiently learned to subdue the lawlessness of nature, nor to see that Christ, like Charity, is better than all triumphs of dispute or or compassings of any ends, however good in themselves.

I think men have much to answer for, who, knit together in the closely woven relations of domestic life, suffer themselves to be estranged and divided by some careless words that have been spoken in heat, but laid up in coolness, who expect hereafter to give an account to Him who is the God of all the families of Israel. But a much heavier charge will those have to respond to at the bar of Christ, who have fomented schisms in His Church, or have given occasion by their causeless offence to weak consciences, and their defiance of authority, or by the bitterness, on the other hand, of their opposition to such grievances, to widen alienation among brethren, whom it should be the endeavor of every Christian person to bring to a truer understanding and a more hearty embrace of each other in the Body of Jesus.

It is, however, in the way of Christian beneficence,

obstacles to Charity that are not unfrequently met with. To go to deserving poverty is a pleasure. Goodness carries its own reward, as it passes its round among grateful dependents. The care of virtuous indigence, the visit to the home that has been suddenly robbed of its comforts by the non-employment of its head—or the approach to the sick-bed that blesses your welcome steps, is a positive joy to the heart. There is no trial but to love of ease in crossing such humble thresholds and putting one's self to the trouble of gathering about them the little things they require. To teach well-mannered and interested children in a Sunday School is surely no hardship. But it is encounter with ignorance that cares not to be instructed, with poverty that is thriftless, with sickness that is callous—with homes that it is disheartening to try to make better, and with inmates that it is almost impossible to reform from their drunkenness or vice—this is the trial of Charity, and this is the heavy yoke that can never be made easy, but by bearing it in Christ's name and remembering that He first bore it Himself for our example.

If there be another sphere in which Charity is sometimes sorely tempted to give up, it is in that department of Christian usefulness which more nearly touches the sustentation of the Church.

We encounter, perhaps, the appeal for Missions.

Missions! why they are everywhere to be found, and their cry is unceasing! Ought it not to be so? What else than a Missionary call addresses you, in almost every instance of application from beyond your immediate borders? It is seldom that almsgiving is asked at your hands from any distant quarter. A famine, or flood, or fire, may be an occasional exception: but the whole multitude of applicants from abroad may be summed up, under the one general appellation of askers for help in the way of extending the privileges of the Church. No wonder then at the frequency of the cry for Missions. It is the one great entreaty of a world lying in wickedness.

The extent of the want — the constancy of the appeal to meet it—the limited result obtained for the means bestowed—the inefficiency of the instruments employed, and the seeming waste of material—to say nothing of the general apathy of the Church that is demoralizing to individual zeal — all these present a formidable array of opponents, against which Christian Charity has to fight hard in order to keep up any interest at all in the work for which Christ died.

Then the Church at our door, or the enterprise that we have particularly in hand for doing good to human souls. It is clamorous—it presses heavily —it wants enlargement or completion, or it labors

under debt. We blame, it may be, some neglect of the past, or some want of foresight or wise economy in the management of affairs. Evils have become chronic, and it is not easy to get rid of them. We think others should put their shoulder to the burden that now presses upon us, and we find it easy to excuse our own inaction under the plea that the task is great and the helpers are few. Is this the love of Christ? Is this the Charity of the Gospel? Said a little innocent, when chided for her anxiety to throw some crumbs to the snowbirds, because God would take care of His creatures, "I want to *help* Him to take care of them." Do *you* wish to help Christ to build up His Church, then let your love for *Him* control your conduct! Do you believe it will be for His honor and the good of your fellow-men, that a place for His worship and service—adequate, complete, and free from all encumbrance, should stand up in the midst of a population demanding it—then do, out of loyal affection alone, your own part in the matter; yea, and more than your part—yea, all that you can—(for who knows but that it is the work you are sent into the world especially to do)—and care nothing for the amount of others' exertion, except it be for their own sake and their Lord's. This will exemplify your possession of the Charity that is chiefly known by its sacrifice—and the heavenly origin

of which is seen in this, that it suffers, endures, and triumphs.

Were I not to remind you, though very briefly, of two other characteristics of this Holy Love, I should be doing great injustice to the subject before you. For it is an additional mark of the "Perfectness," of which Christian Charity is the bond, that through this one grace all the other elements that go to make up our better life principally take form. It is in the unspokenness—the "*Ορησκεια*," or vesture.

Religion is little more than Practical Love to God and to Man. It is founded in faith, but its faith must work by love, purifying the heart and overcoming the world. It is crowned with hope, but the hope that maketh not ashamed is that through which the love of God is shed abroad in the heart. With the faith and hope, Charity alone abides of all the gifts of the Spirit — but it is greater than either of its *permanent* companions, because it includes them and perfects the object for which they are bestowed. "Pure Religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." Then there must be self-discipline, and there must be outward goodness. The former is chiefly a hidden Work —the latter is open, palpable, and in the full eye

of the world. The one is our individual concern, the other enters into all the relations we sustain to our Maker and neighbor. Prayer, sacrament, the reading and hearing of the word, with all the instrumentalities of the Church we are called to heed have no higher end to serve than to make us Christlike in our conduct. Do not trust to any feelings of delight in Him or of enjoyment in His service, which do not produce in you His mind and heart. Rely upon no experiences or observances, which flatter you in the absence of a loving, considerate, peace-seeking, forbearing, enduring, childlike and humble heart—for in the lack of this, Christ will never know you. Do not depend upon even offices of mercy and deeds of compassion — for you may bestow all your goods to feed the poor and yet have not charity. You may also give your body to be burned—and yet be destitute of it — therefore trust not in mortifications and immolations, as such.

And lest you should think that this is a task-master service, let me apprise you of one other feature in this incomparable Charity — namely — its *perpetuity*.

You should not imagine that you are undergoing discipline for any short-lived term. You are willing to practice very serious self-denial for the sake of success in business, and to put yourselves to no little discomfort for social position and enjoyment. Men

will spend their lives in the pursuit of knowledge. They will deny themselves sleep and food in the attainment of some object of ambition. To hold listening worlds by the eloquence of their speech, or to work miracles of enterprise in removing mountains from their seats and bridging oceans and seas, they will deem nothing too much in the form of a sacrifice. And yet they know, that all attainments and professions that belong only to this state must perish in the using—or, at best, are but the scaffolding which must one day be taken down, to expose to view the solid structure of character that has been reared up within—the true building, to abide — in the lamentable want of which even the scaffolding will have failed of its purpose.

But immortal Charity will never come to an End. It is an educated virtue, that is to find place for its exercise in a superior sphere. To some niche will all true goodness be translated, when it has ceased from its work on earth. It is now preparing for its Heavenly occupation. It is getting rid of the selfishnesses, irritations, and shortcomings incident to a condition of sin—and when it shall be truly sanctified, to become indeed, as it ought to be, the bond of *perfection*, it will be clothed upon with an imperishable virtue, and gathered up into the bundle of everlasting fellowships.

Oh, fail not of this Charity. Seek it in His grace who alone can impart it. Draw from His communion, service and example, the aid that you need—and let the Spirit that was in Jesus quicken you daily, lest while you think that you live, you be counted *dead* before God.

SERMON XV.

THE APPEAL OF CHRIST'S HUMILIATION.

"*Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus; who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*"—PHILIP. ii. 5–8.

THE crucifixion of Christ is the crowning act of a life of continuous sacrifice. It is the terminal point of the wonderful descent of the Son of God from "the glory which He had with the Father before the world was," which we are called to contemplate this Holy Week. Every step of the descent was a fresh proof of the abnegation of self for the good of the world. It was a mark of disinterestedness of the highest kind. It was an act of profound sympathy and love. The beauty of its picture consisted in the voluntary character of its offering: in its surrender of choice, of all that was distinguishingly and fittingly its own for a condition at the opposite extreme of privation and pain.

The Cross then is not the exclusive object to which our thoughts should be directed, nor are its affecting lessons first learned from Calvary—be those lessons what they may, and whatever their import. He, who begins at Calvary to contemplate the work of Redemption, falls immeasurably short of the truth that he ought to know. "Who is the Sufferer?" is the first question he must ask. If from his previous acquaintance with the Gospel, he can answer with the centurion, "Truly, this was a *righteous man:*" if from the impression made upon him by the conduct of the Sufferer as He hangs suspended from the tree, he is forced also with the Roman to confess, "This was the Son of God," has he learned enough? What does he understand by the title of "Son of God?" Does he mean what the admiration and awe of a soldier of Cæsar meant by it, His claim to divinity on account of His lofty and sublime endurance — His heroic virtue, His godlike passion? Or something more? Was He in reality, what He was ignorantly called by the thoughtful observer, "the Son of God?" What had been His history before? What was His origin? Whence came He upon His entrance into these earthly surroundings?

These are inquiries which only a Revelation will help us to meet with a satisfactory reply; the importance of which, however, is readily seen, by just such

interrogatories being put by the Saviour not long before He died, "What think ye of Christ? *Whose* Son is He?" And to which, when answered, "The Son of David," He rejoined, "How then in Spirit does David call Him *Lord*, saying, 'The Lord said unto my lord, sit Thou on my right hand until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool?' If David then call Him Lord, how is He His Son?" The true and only explanation of this mystery is the union in Jesus of a Divine and a Human nature.

The Being who became incarnate, and eventually bled upon Calvary, descended first from above. His Person was that of the Only Begotten of the Father. Revelation draws aside the veil and lets us see a glimpse of the invisible state.—One dwelling "in the bosom of the Highest, the Brightness of His glory and the express Image of His Person" is disclosed to our view: and words like these are heard from His lips. "Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared me: in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come . . . to do Thy will, O God."

In that hypostatical union that unity of essence in which the adorable Trinity dwells forever, there was a filial though inscrutable relation to the everlasting Spring of Divinity, and an ineffable procession

from its fountain, of which we hear and read, but cannot understand it. In the unsearchable depths of the Godhead, it was possible for One to be "in the form of God," that is, to share in His perfections, to be of one substance with Him, and to present the same outward manifestation of glory, and yet to conceal, or put in abeyance His divine parts. It was possible for Him not to prefer this exalted condition for one that divested Him of honor and power, in the interests of the creatures whom He would fain befriend.

"Thought it not robbery to be equal with God" is more correctly translated, "esteemed it not a prize to be sought after to be on an equality with God;" deemed it not a covetable possession, in other words, a matter of supreme desire and election. There was a condition of even loftier choice than this in the eyes of the "*Beloved*" of the Father, the Father Himself, out of His own "tender love for mankind," seeking to deliver them from sin and ruin. It was in sympathy with the Father, and for the accomplishment of His plans of mercy, that the Only Begotten undertook the necessary sacrifice for man. He emptied Himself of His essential glory. So far as it was possible, He left behind Him the proper estate of Divinity, and took on Him the condition of humanity. In "the form of a servant," He appeared, "and in the

likeness of men;"—being born of an humble Virgin in the manger, nursed at her breasts, trained under her teaching, and like every other child led up to manhood through the slow growth of years, in wisdom and stature. All this was possible because of the mystical union with His Godhead of a reasonable soul and a mortal body.

And "being found in this fashion," He brought Himself into contact with our poor humanity in its most lowly surroundings; not into the circle of cultivation and learning, not into the society of power and influence, not into the midst of the elegancies and enjoyments or even the comforts of life; but He touched it in the obscurity of a despised Galilean village, in the narrowness of a peasant's home in Nazareth, amid the slender opportunities of unlettered parents to teach Him, with the poverty of a pilgrim who had not, when He began his ministry, even the possession of a place wherein to lay His head; with the companionship of disciples as destitute as Himself of all that is desirable in the world's esteem; with access chiefly, and almost exclusively to the society of the poor, with familiarity with suffering, immediate neighborhood to pain and sorrow and vice, in the revolting presence of sin, and the assaults of self-righteous critics, and ever vigilant foes, subject to flight, to retirement, to hiding at times, bound to the burden of exhausting days and

the solitude of midnight prayers, with three years and a half of unwearied ministration, with lonely self-communion about the end before Him which no attendant understood, and the baptism of suffering continually in the foreground, of which He of necessity must taste and was impatient to receive, and last—the final journey to the place of suffering, a moment's triumph, a cruel betrayal to enemies, the fearful agony in Gethsemane, His mockery by a priestly court, and ignominious death in Golgotha.

These are the descending steps, so have I called them, which the Saviour made from Heaven to Earth, and from Earth to a lower still. These measure the distance from His equality to God to His standing on a level with man, and from the level of manhood as such, to the depth to which humanity may be brought. Leave out of sight the essential Divinity of Jesus, and you fail to comprehend what He did. Confine your view to the Cross, and see not the gradual approach to this culminating act through ways of disinterested love and patient endurance, and you come short of beholding it as it is.

The Cross is the unspeakable expression of tenderness for man. It is the consummate proof of a sacrifice of self solely for the good of others. Nothing can add to it. "Greater love hath no man than this that he lay down his life for his friends;" unless it be

for enemies, whom he counts as friends. Every thing that went before it tended in the same direction, while Christ's whole life was one of disinterested beneficence. It was a self-abnegating life from beginning to close; a going about doing good, to His own personal inconvenience, to His positive discomfort and loss. It was a pattern of incomparable lowliness. Humility and patient endurance marked it at every stage, and breathing through its services was there an aroma of affection, of genuine demonstrative and abiding love, which was as fragrant as it rose to heaven as when it fell upon the sensibility of grateful hearts. If you had witnessed it for yourselves, if *you* had carried your sick into His presence that He might touch them, or had you in your distress on account of sin made your appeal to Him, and He had answered you favorably, you would not have doubted the reality of His pity. But some of you stand, I fear, looking upon the Crucified now, and think it is nothing to you—at least, that it has nothing of tender compassion for you, this spectacle of suffering—as you pass coldly, though solemnly, by. The sight is august to you and awful. It seems like an appalling tragedy, or a tremendous display of justice frowning over the world, in which even the innocent Jesus is involved, and to propitiate which He dies.

This is one aspect, no doubt. There was a neces-

sity for this death in order to the redemption of the lost, and that God might be just and yet justify the believing. The divine attributes were magnified by it; Holiness was exalted and sin was condemned. But as surely as "Mercy and Truth met together," in Jesus, and "Righteousness and Peace kissed each other," so certainly was there another aspect properly borne by this spectacle, the aspect of winning and most inviting love. Look at it in the light of foregoing occurrences. Discern in it the last and crowning achievement of a self-forgetting devotion to the welfare of the world, and of each sinner within it, which began with leaving the realm of glory for man, and followed up its errand through the inception of the Incarnation to the completed Atonement: and it will give rise to quite another order of impressions and emotions. And it is very important that we should have this different order of impressions and emotions, both for knowing as we ought, the love which Christ hath to us, and for winning us to the imitation of Himself in acts of like sacrifice and self-denial for others.

I suppose the story of St. Elizabeth of Hungary is sufficiently familiar to all of you, to furnish an illustration. The daughter of a king, the wife of a prince by whom she was beloved, Elizabeth turned her back, in a time of distress and plague, upon the delights of her home to minister at the bedsides of her miserable sub-

jects. Exchanging her purple and fine linen for the homely garb of a peasant woman, she travelled from one quarter to another, and by day and by night made the wretched lot of her people her own. At length, when the pestilence had spent its force, or more correctly speaking, when bereavement had clothed her in garments of mourning on account of the death of her knightly husband in the course of a Crusade to the Holy Land, circumstances led her to suspend her charity. An usurping kinsman seized her kingdom, and drove her cruelly into exile and into poverty. Returning at length to her place with her children, when the usurper was overcome, she declined for herself a palace and a crown, and erected with a part of her remaining wealth a hospital, in which she served continually and eventually died. A stranger might suppose that she was worn out by old age and decrepitude. But no, at the early age of twenty-four, in the very morning of life, she breathed her last breath of holy consecration and service in the bosom of her God and Saviour.

We are affected by a story like this. It is beautiful because it is Christlike, and for the reason that Christ's own pattern is beautiful, because of its sacrifice of self for the benefit of another. The story of St. Elizabeth, however, is not altogether unique, though striking. Scores of Primitive Christians surrendered themselves

to servitude for the sake of redeeming captives into whose place they entered, that they might return to needy families or important labors. The Blessed Saviour of the world surrendered Himself to the torture of Crucifixion and the temporary captivity of him who had the power of death, even the devil, that He might save from destruction both you and me. We may not be called, like the princess, to deny ourselves severely in some day of visitation by encountering its blast and its blight: or we may be so called. We are not likely to be constrained like the early faithful, to put ourselves into bonds for the purpose of ransoming brethren. The theatre of personal sacrifice is seldom so commanding. The field of voluntary offering and disinterested labor for others is commonly very modest. It is in byways where there are few observers. It is in unchronicled visits to the needy and suffering. It is in provision for the aged, the homeless, and the invalid, by self-denying gifts, by contributions that cost us something, real tests of our sympathy and our copy of Christ. It is in countless little services at home for the comfort and happiness of our kindred. It is in the public and business intercourse of life, repression of anger under insult, of murmur under disappointment, and of impatience and despondency under the weight of the attempt to be useful and to do good, which proves too heavy.

When I think of the sharp contrasts between wealth and poverty, between competence and want, between health and debility, between happy homes and wretched alleys and cots, I come almost to the conclusion that we know little of Christ. When I consider the cold hand with which charity is dispensed, the easy forgetfulness with which need is overlooked, the lame apologies for not giving because of a reduction of means still ample with *self-denial* for a considerable benefaction, because also of personal inconvenience in looking after the destitute, of being absent from Church or home when an application is made for them, and of supposing there are plenty of people to care for the dependent, or that because others are careless, every one else is justified in neglect; when I consider still farther the expedients that must be adopted in order to open the closed purses of the public by combining the consideration of their own private pleasure with beneficence, pleasure most lawful in its place, but not in connection with a deed of compassion, I feel as if the rebuke of the adorable Saviour were upon us, and not His smile.

"Is this your imitation of Me, my children?" We can almost hear the word of reproach. Is this your response to One, who emptied Himself of His glory for you, who stooped to the condition of a servant, and a sufferer on your behalf—who though He was rich, became poor for your enrichment, who died that

you might live? Is this your return to your Benefactor, and your requital of His goodness? Do you think that Almighty God, who of His tender love toward mankind hath sent His Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ to take upon Him our flesh and to suffer death upon the Cross, that all mankind should follow the example of His great humility—that He will mercifully grant to any thus following the example of His patience, or thus not following His endurance and self-denial, will grant them to be made partakers of His resurrection unto life?

O, let us remember that to copy after Christ is the indispensable condition of salvation by Him. And that we may be helped to copy, as well as to acknowledge our debt to Him—let us endeavor to "comprehend what is the breadth and length, and depth and height—and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge."

This week is for the purpose. It begins with the lowly entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, and closes with His agony, sacrifice and death. There is a personal reference to each of you in its every incident and progress. Every step appeals to you as the appeal of a friend. "Is it nothing to you?" "Is it nothing to you?"

SERMON XVI.

ON PRESENTING OUR BODIES A LIVING SACRIFICE.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is you reasonable service."—ROM. xii. 1.

IT was in view of the admission of the Roman Christians into the Church, and of those especially who were Gentiles by birth, that St. Paul laid upon them this word of exhortation. He might have entreated them in this strain by the Divine goodness in general; as seen in the comforts of every-day life; but no; the one distinguishing mercy of being called into the Church was so much larger in his sight, that on the basis of this, and on this superlatively, he planted his entreaty. There was no blessing in his eyes comparable to that of having a part in the Family of God. Lineal descent from Abraham was a privileged condition. Engraftment into the stock of which he was the root, was to be made inheritor of the promises originally bestowed on him and confined to his seed. The Christian Church is heir to the

Hebrew, and a continuation of its line. In distinction from nations unenlightened by Revelation, Israel first, and after it Christendom has been signally favored. To have one's birth in a land of light, to be providentially descended from a pious ancestry, and surrounded by institutions of True Religion, is, to say nothing of Baptism into the Body of Christ, a distinction for good, which can only be measured by the superiority of a high and flourishing civilization and the incomparable gift of knowing God. St. Paul dwells upon the temporary lopping off of the Jews from the parent tree on account of their rejection of Christ, and the acceptance in their stead of the Gentile World,—but only to exclaim both at "the severity and goodness of God, on them which fell severity," but on the other "goodness, if they continue in His goodness; otherwise they also shall be cut off."

Just at this point of sight he utters his exhortation, "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

You notice the motive, the ground of appeal. It is not the stern obligation of law; not the duty of obedience, enforced by the relations in which we stand to our Maker as creatures of His hand and

subjects of His rule. Not loyalty is invoked, but gratitude. And the language used is that of entreaty, not command; the affectionate, persuasive language of a parent, addressing children, not slaves. "I beseech you." If it were conscience only that led to obedience, it would fall far short of securing that measure of dutiful service which is accorded to thankfulness. Conscience impresses one's duty, but gratitude attracts to its performance. The latter obtains by choice what the former often exacts by force. Drawn by a consideration of the Scripture—that "the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance," an appreciative and tender heart will not only repent, but will renew its consecration to Him who has blessed it. It will take courage, even in the chief of sinners, to return to its Father, confessing its sins, and to offer itself and all that is left to it, in hope of acceptance. Goodness makes confident. Those who have felt the cords of affection and the bands of love are moved to respond. And is there any inducement so potent in kind to act upon the soul in its thoughtful moods, as a perception of the beneficence and tender mercies of God, especially in His Gospel? "Let favor be showed to the wicked," it is true, "yet will he not learn righteousness." And the reason is this. "He despises the riches of His goodness and forbearance." "An unwise man doth not well consider, neither doth a

fool understand this. But whoso is wise, he will ponder these things, and he shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord."

Come we now to the duty specifically set forth by the Apostle: that of presenting our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service.

You can hardly fail to be struck by the use of one word in this passage of Scripture, the word "*bodies.*" Why "bodies," and not ourselves, our whole nature in flesh and spirit? Undoubtedly the term is comprehensive of all, but it is discriminating, notwithstanding. What would have first arrested the attention of the observer in any and every religion of the ancients, whether Hebrew or Gentile, but the offering of sacrifice? The characteristic of Judaism and the characteristic of idolatry was animal oblation. The bodies of slain victims were heaped daily upon their altars. With these they atoned, they made expiation, they sought audience for their prayers, they paid the promises of their day of trouble, they expressed their thanks and rendered up to the Giver a certain part of their substance. If their offerings at any time were united with others of the first fruits of their harvest, or with fragrant incense, the idea was the same. It was the embodiment of worship in material and external symbols. Now St. Paul caught this obvious

idea, which suggested to his mind at once that the Christian, like the Hebrew and the Pagan, must have his distinguishing services of religion, in bodily sacrifices and devotions; which instead of being offerings of calves and lambs, must be tenders of themselves in the outward and visible expressions of their nature, namely their bodies—not of course, excluding their souls—their bodies the counterpart of animal oblations, even when in their public worship they present the True and Only Sacrifice, the memorial of the Lamb which was slain once for all, to the Father of our spirits and the Judge of all flesh.

This is the meaning of the Apostle when he characterizes the Christian, as a "reasonable," he intends a rational or *spiritual* service, in distinction from a merely material. "The hour cometh," our Saviour had said, "and now is, in which the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth." Accordingly, His people are bidden to present themselves, their bodies enshrining their living souls, and not the bloody victims of the Altar. From the tender of types and shadows they are wholly excused, because the Sole Propitiation for the sins of the world has been sealed in Jesus; and as they approach under the shadow and sacrament of the Cross of Christ, their only duty is to believe in Him, and to glorify Him in their *body* and in their *spirit* which are *His*.

But over and above, my brethren, this explanation of the language of the text, I cannot but think, when I consider, not only the passage before us, but many other passages in St. Paul's Epistles in which he lays stress upon our bodies as such, and the importance of making them servants to Christ, that there is a breadth and depth of import in the word which I have particularly instanced, that I have by no means exhausted.

Our bodies are not simply a convenient covering for this interior spirit, to be cast off at death never again to be needed; but they are united to our soul by a bond closer than wedlock, which, though suspended in dissolution, is to be renewed at the resurrection, by the change of this corruptible into incorruption, and this mortal into glorious immortality. Our bodies, wonderfully made as we are, are as much a part of our person as the consciousness that inspires them. The interplay of our spiritual and physical natures conduces to mutual benefit. A vigorous state of the body enhances intellectual, and even moral enjoyment. The mind is never so strong or so orderly in its movements, other things being equal, as when the blood flows freely through the system, and the force of the nervous system pours its lively current along its magnetic wires. When the flesh and the spirit are in perfect accord, pleasure thrills the frame as music an instru-

ment. Every mental impulse is felt to the body's extremities. The kindling eye, the glowing cheek, the eloquent tongue and the eloquent act attest their sympathy, and the flame within increases the fervor of that without. So in the counter direction, whatever enlivens and delights the senses imparts animation to the interior being.

But even apart from this essential connection of soul and body, there is such a dependence of our unseen self upon our visible portion for the revelation of what we are, that we could hardly be said to offer ourselves to any sort of service unless we offered our bodies with us. Our bodies are the medium of all our actions in reference to the external world. We address our fellow-being, we bring ourselves to his knowledge and into contact with him, we do him good or we do him evil, either by some bodily organ or influence that emanates through our bodily members. We acquire our knowledge, gain our possessions, receive our impressions for better or worse, chiefly through the vehicle of our material parts. We are identified by others, and even by ourselves, principally by feature and stature, and bearing that appertain to our outward man. And although these bodies are nothing in themselves apart from our souls, yet the latter can do little without their concert, and in the want of control over their evil propensities, our souls must suffer fearfully from

heredity of fault and from vicious indulgence, besides showing themselves out in flagrant wickedness. For what are the forms in which man offends most? They are violence and murder, intemperance and greed, sensuality and adultery, and all these have to do with the body.

How solemnly does St. Paul remind his heathen converts that their bodies are "the members of Christ," the purchase of His blood. "Shall they take the members of Christ and join them to an harlot?" How movingly does he press them with the thought that their "bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost," admonishing them of the peril of profaning this temple, lest they be destroyed! With what fidelity and constancy does he warn them that the drunkard, and the adulterer and the covetous shall have none inheritance in the kingdom of God! Be no "strikers," he says, no "brawlers." The Master had said before, "Let him that stole steal no more." "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth." "If thine eye or thy hand offend thee, cut them off." There are sins indeed which are "without the flesh," but worse sins (and these are a sample) cannot come through the flesh.

So it was not without reason, that the Apostle worded his entreaty to his Christian brethren as in the Scripture before us; that they should "present their *bodies* a living sacrifice."

But independently of the fact that we must keep under the carnal, are we not too forgetful altogether of the importance of participating in our bodies, as well as spirits, in the worship and service of Almighty God? Do we not omit too often in our public devotions the duty of falling down and kneeling before the Lord our Maker and enlisting in prayer and praise with the best member that we have? Are our voices, like those of the early faithful, lifted up with one accord in petition, and do we teach and admonish one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs? How frequently while we guard the portals of the soul do we give license to eyes which lay us open to temptation, as if our eyes were foreign to the soul. How many a time we expose our ears to hearing what our consciences reprove, and allow our tongues to speak what charity and principle forbid alike! How constantly we apply our hands to business without thinking of the Being to whom we should devote our toils, and without seriously inquiring, "What wouldest Thou, O Lord, have me to do?"

If in the hour of prayer, private or public, our posture be irreverent; if yielding to careless habit we sit upon cushioned seat or lie recumbent on our bed when we speak with God, our worship is nought, or most imperfect, unless bodily infirmity excuse our doing so. If we give rein to prattling speech or liberty to roving gaze, however in other respects we

guard our principles, we convert our profession into a "seeming to be religious," not really being such, and our piety into sham. If we withhold from God the sacrifice which costs us something—personal labor when required, and personal possession when needed, this is keeping back from our Maker part of the purchase of Redemption, and spoiling the rest.

We cannot be too careful to remember the duty of an unreserved dedication, nor yet of the importance of making that dedication in this mortal life. It is not a surrender of ourselves in death that will answer the demand. It is "a living sacrifice" to which the Apostle exhorts. A resigning of ourselves to God with our belongings and acquirements when we can no longer retain them—this is not Religion. It is consecrating body and soul in the midst of activity. Far easier, I believe, to give "one's body to be burned" in the fire of martyrdom, than in the *heat* of the world's temptations to maintain an obedient and consistent life. "A living sacrifice!" Alive, yet dead,—dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God! Full of conscious vitality and quickened power, and yet, like a victim laid upon the altar, sworn unreservedly to the renunciation of self and to obedience to Christ! This is the most difficult of all human achievements. And yet this is incumbent; and to nothing less than this does the holy Apostle incite, and affectionately lead

his brethren, by a remembrance of the tender mercies of God in opening for us a way into His Church.

God delights not in inanimate service. The animal slain in the temple, wholly bereft of its life by undergoing the stroke of the sacrificial knife, was not an oblation pleasing to Jehovah. Nor would the death of the martyr who bleeds for Christ's sake be an acceptable gift, did not the expiring saint still live in Him, both in the act of suffering and the after triumph. The Christian surrender, which is made in full prospect of living long on the earth, stands foremost, no doubt, among the offerings of His people to an Almighty Saviour. And the nearer to childhood this surrender takes place, the more pre-eminent its work in the sight of God our Creator.

There are two qualifications of every sacrifice to Heaven that must not fail of being heeded. In the first place, it must be "holy." Washed from the taint of original sin, it must be kept through youth and after manhood as free from moral defect and stain as we are capable of keeping it. No oblation of man's can be perfectly faultless. All that we do is mixed more or less with sin. But there may be avoidance of careless inconsistency and wilful offending. God will not accept a heart which is divided in its affections between Himself and the world, at one time seeking supremely for the attractions of earth,

and at another, no longer tempted, for the hopes of Heaven. Neither will He acknowledge that person for His, whose body is stained by moral pollution, though bought with a price and once made His dwelling. "Be ye holy," is the injunction, "for I am holy." "Be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." The Spirit will help you by co-operating with your endeavors and answering your earnest prayers. Remember you can never become holy at all, but by that Body which makes clean the sinful body, and that Blood which washes the soul from guilt, under the influences of the Holy Ghost.

And there is a second qualification, of which I am reminded by the words just spoken. Not only must the sacrifice be holy, but "acceptable to God," through Jesus Christ. This is the inestimable privilege we enjoy, the greatest we could possibly have, that God our Father has Himself made us "accepted in the Beloved." "In whom we have access," *all* of us have access, "by One Spirit unto (our) Father." Our imperfect obedience is allowed through Him, and the remaining sinfulness of our nature of which we endeavor to be rid is covered and condoned by His effectual mediation.

Therefore "by the mercies of God," let me entreat

you "to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." This is your offering to Him in spirit and in truth. This is your rational oblation, the holocaust of what you really are—of your spirit animating its fleshly tabernacle, and of your body obedient to its godly motions. Some of you have begun this duty already. I would persuade you to its heartier and more thorough performance. Some of you perhaps have never assayed it, or have fallen back from its good beginning. I would beseech you, brethren, whatever your age, to return afresh to your Father, confessing your faults, and re-dedicate to Him what you have and are. Labor for a fixed and abiding determination to do His will. Endeavor to carry Christian principle into your business, your intercourse with society, your domestic life, and your needful amusement. Keep the door of your lips, lest you offend with your tongue. Turn away your eyes from beholding vanity. Write integrity on your hand and charity on your possessions. Recollect we are members one of another, and one body in Christ, and therefore bound to mutual help.

By the goodness of Him who hath brought us into His Church, by the memory of parents and pastors and teachers who have introduced us to its blessed privileges, by the sainted names of Apostles and

martyrs in a long line of faithful ministers, from the first until now, and of missionaries of the Cross, who at this present moment endeavor, as fathers before them have endeavored, to open wide the door of safety to strangers to Christ, I appeal to you, brethren, to co-operate with God by being true yourselves to your holy calling, and to cooperate with His servants in making complete and perfect their work for Him until every human soul shall know of God, and every mortal knee shall bow to Him.

He that assisteth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall share in a prophet's reward. But few of us have done anything that is worthy of mention. Let us help good men, and the cause dear to good men, who no longer live, that we may have a part with them, when we come with them to receive of our Master for the works done in the body.

SERMON XVII.

MANLY CHRISTIANITY.

"*Be thou strong therefore, and show thyself a man.*"—1 KINGS ii. 2.

THIS was the dying injunction of King David upon Solomon, who was about to encounter the arduous duties of the magistrate, on the very threshold of entering on his office. Two notable offenders, one of whom the weakness of the king, and the other his plighted word had kept him from calling to account, it would devolve upon Solomon to punish. Age with its gray hairs was in the act of giving up in favor of youth with its freshness. The tried and disciplined monarch was on the point of surrendering to his inexperienced son the government of a people who must be ruled in the fear of God and with rare wisdom and energy. "Be thou strong therefore," said the expiring parent, as he charged the coming heir to his throne with his momentous duties, "and show thyself a Man."

Strength, my young brethren, appropriately belongs

to youth. There is always something strong in the health of early manhood. The elastic movement of the mind and body—hope, ardor, and fancy free—the quick flow of the blood, the supple play of the joints and a well-knit muscle impress themselves on the look of the rising aspirant. There is a consciousness of power, a sense of vigor in the breast of the young, which is half the secret of its possession. Persons older may be abler, but they have not an equal feeling of ability. The daring of youth would be presumption to age, but it is to itself a pastime. The old are content to walk, but the youthful must fly. That which the veteran expects to accomplish slowly, the candidate for life looks forward to doing without labor or delay.

This sense of strength, however, is not wholly to be attributed to constitutional liveliness, as it is the fruit in part of an untried use of one's ability. A talent untested knows no limitation to the range that it can be made to reach. An eye glancing over the future, its labors and its victories, is kindled to an unwonted measure of illumination, because of its rare consciousness of freedom to choose what it may, and a proud feeling of privilege to make all its own. Whereas experience shows us that there are boundaries to human toil; and the exercise of our gifts with failure and defeat, pretty soon shuts us up to the conviction

that *morally* we are feeble, and that in *mental* achievements, if we would be *masters* at all, we must make election of that to which we will devote our attention. This limitation of the field of effort abates the feeling, and makes it sensibly less for the many-sided tasks of life in proportion as we grow in years.

And yet, young rising manhood is notwithstanding strong. It has undeveloped capacities, which, if called forth in time, will fit it for any emergency to which God may summon. It has a wealth of being, both by nature and grace, that needs only to be evoked by seasonable exertion—before the tender twigs have grown rigid, before elastic forces have lost their spring, before the fountain of might has been dried up at its sources, or overgrown, clogged and sealed at its outlet.

Age cannot avail of such latent power, though it may richly possess it. Maturity in years can seldom command its use, though it may have been born to its inheritance. And why? Because of the neglected or never enjoyed opportunity of eliciting its treasure, while there was space to improve it and make it an actual fee. Not every massive frame is apt for combat or for toil. Less strength of bone, less fulness of muscle and less health of body will accomplish more with discipline, than a greater without it. There are many noble intellects that have lain bedded in

obscurity from birth to death, like jewels in their quarries. Many an unstoried Hampden has been a stranger to himself, no less than to the world, and mute inglorious Miltons have passed, with poetry unwritten and unsung—yea unknown to their own breasts, into the darkness out of which they came. "*Stir* up," wrote St. Paul to Timothy, "stir up the gift that is in thee." Appropriate and make your own your endowments, as good stewards. As you have time develop them. As well be destitute as possessors of stores which you have neither the industry to employ nor the sagacity to discern.

You will be reminded, I think, at this point, of an observation dwelt upon in my last lecture, in respect to the opportunity denied to a large proportion of mankind for really knowing themselves. I referred in that sermon to the obvious inequality between men which finds its explanation for the most part in their unequal privileges. But where privileges exist, no such explanation of disparity among those who have them, can be accepted in excuse of their neglect. It is the duty of all persons to make the most of their talents; and however such talents may be estimated upon their own account, yet he who inherits them can neither reverence himself nor command for himself the respect of the world, unless he attain, through their diligent employment, to a Manly Robustness.

The subject with which this series of Advent Discourses is to be closed, is—Reverence for Self, or that proper estimate of one's own nature and attributes which leads to a high tone of conduct and a wholesome religion.

A proper estimate of one's nature and attributes! It may fairly be doubted, whether valuation of this sort is in any case possible in the absence of all *conscious power*, of all *feeling of strength*, either bodily, mental or moral. A man may be reverent toward his manhood, and yet, not of necessity, respect himself; for he may act wholly unworthy of it. He may fall short of every requirement which it makes upon him. He may wear it as a thing totally distinct and apart from him, as the garment upon his shoulders, or as little to do with his personality as the purse in his pocket.

A man's *self* and a man's *nature* are by no means synonymous, though they ought to be so. He may wholly despise the first while he stands in awe of the last. He may hold in detestation his own conduct and character, wish himself for his vices the dog under the table instead of the guest at his side, and yet shudder to think of his immortal part. The keen sense of his degradation may be heightened by the very dignity of the nature that he dishonors.

So that, to bring the two into one, and invest the

former with whatever is noble and grand in the latter, some sort of proprietorship must be acquired by man in the endowments of his being, by which he will feel that they are not gifts only, but likewise *gains*, and that he is verily a man by virtue of thought, speech and act, such as become his Humanity. There is an influence, no doubt, that the mere possession of Manhood exerts upon us. The influence of *office* and *position* is felt. The father is not forgetful of the fatherhood that elevated him above the level of his child. The judge is consciously affected by his relations to the bench, and the ruler by the demands upon him of his seat of power. Even the ermine and toga and official chair are silent reminders. The pastor's crook and the pure white robes of his consecration put into the hand and over the person of a bishop in the Church of God, are a constant lesson of purity, and elevation of life. But how much more should that imperishable honor and that unmeasured worth, which God has conferred upon every human being, in the nature he has received, influence his aim and conduct for the better, if he pauses to think of them! Can any consideration have greater weight than this—the proper dignity of his Manhood, in the way of leading him to a high-minded career? Shall I repeat the question?—Can any consideration have greater weight than this, the proper dignity of his manhood? Alas!

while one only answer should be given, practically, my brethren, in the absence of all attainment becoming such a manhood, the thought of it is neither inspiring nor restraining. We must pay honor to and not receive it only from the Humanity we inherit. We must gain in it a sort of ownership by worthily using its gifts. We must be men in reality and not simply in title.

Now a consciousness of manhood comes through some sort of power. "Be *strong*," "Be *strong*," is the command laid upon the candidate for it in the act of entering on its stage. Who can stand well in his own esteem, if in every respect he is feeble?

The workman reveres himself, if *physically* capable. His sinewy arm and skilful hand are the occasion of an honest pride. He rises up with a more manly bearing before his fellow-creatures, and meets difficulty and peril with a loftier courage on account of this material furnishing.

If intellectually capable, having his opinions and judgments upon which he rests with a modest assurance, he respects himself. Few things are so well poised on their pivot as an intelligent mind. It is not learning nor culture that is needed for this independence of position, but a habit of thought, and making the best use of one's means of knowledge for coming to a sound conclusion. Such a mind, when you en-

counter it in the farm-house and the machine-shop, you will feel a positive element; no cipher, no reed shaken by the wind. Against its firm and well-grounded footings you must bring a corresponding vigor to bear, if you would change its position or dislodge it from its place. You respect its self-reliance, and its self-reliance is the occasion of its own lofty, though modest carriage, which would be mortified and abased, if in its intercourse with men it had no views to present, and no force of reflection, no knowledge, no intelligence to bring to bear.

But sometimes, in the absence both of material and intellectual vigor, there is a purity, a truth, and a goodness of heart which raise him who possesses them to a higher plane of distinction than any other sort of merit. There is no quality we venerate like that which is *moral* in its kind. As nothing lowers us in our opinion so much as the want of it, so nothing awakens an equal amount of self-respect as a consciousness of rectitude. "A noble life," unfolded out of the impotent elements of constitutional frailty, makes the great soul that lives it quite sensible of elevation, albeit, it is encased in a rickety mass of humanity that only clogs and encumbers it. St. Agnes walked with maidenly dignity among her enemies, wholly a stranger to fear, because she was sustained by her unblemished innocence. The good

deacon, Laurentius, blushed not to respond to the demand of his Emperor for the Church's treasures by bringing together the blind, lame and infirm, because he was justly proud of Christian charity to them. There was in all these cases a feeling of strength, of strength of character and principle, which explained very naturally the reverent sentiment that they felt for their own manly or womanly virtues.

Let us proceed now to an illustration of the bearing of such strength upon a high tone of conduct.

In the first place, let us notice its connection with a *brave and courageous* spirit. He who is fully equipped for the great battle of life, need never be a coward; not for the reason of his outward defences, but his inward support; because one, merely outwardly armed, is like the timid soldier in the ranks, whom only the surrounding of other soldiers makes bold, or like the unworthy knight, who plucked valor from helm and corslet rather than his own stout heart. The sense of being equal to the exigency in hand leads a man to grapple with it quite undismayed.

Such a man is a champion in the often unequal contests of society, for right against wrong, for weakness against oppression, for truth against falsehood. He flings himself into the breach before injustice. He is a shield to slandered worth and a cover to prostrate innocence from the following of vindictive malice.

He is not afraid, by the exposure of his person or by speaking out the convictions of an honest mind, of being incommoded or injured—not afraid of being compromised by a kind word of apology for a neighbor misunderstood.

He is willing to be known on the side of his God, when His name is blasphemed, or His Word is treated with derision. When a Revelation is impugned in high places—when faith in it is counted a stigma and religion is made a badge of reproach, when the foundations of the Church, without any fault of her children (for "what hath the righteous done?") seem to be giving way before assailants, he is fearless to avow his belief, and not impatient to see the end of the struggle, as if he were diffident of ultimate victory.

He is brave also in the endurance of suffering and the encounter of trial which he cannot avert. He loses nothing of his manhood in misfortune. He goes to work courageously to gather up from the debris the best he can for the reconstruction of his estate, or he submits with fortitude to the future poverty of his lot. If the ship must go down, he stands the noble model of a man, bracing the tender wife of his bosom with his own heroic virtue and trust in Heaven—till they disappear beneath the waves. He is not the low cowardly crewsman who looks first to his own safety,

but he sees the little craft put off well freighted with all it can carry, and then having done what he could for others, he remembers himself.

The most commanding type of fortitude, however, that the world has seen is that which has grown out of a combination of qualities *moral* in their description. The will, the affections and the conscience have have risen up to conquer where the flesh has failed. Recall to mind the bloody scenes of the Revolution in France. Tender and delicate women, who never "adventured the sole of their foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness," then waded through gore to the scaffold with an energy and courage that put stout soldiers to shame. The undaunted mien of queen Marie Antoinette almost arrested the blow of the executioner and awed into silence the ruffian. When the hardy companions of Dr. Kane bowed to the severity of the Arctic winter, his own unquailing spirit battled triumphantly with its rigors, and carried him, though of frailer make, unharmed through cold and privation, to which some of them fell victims.

There is something of Divinity in moral strength. All other is human. We see the Perfect Pattern of it in the Saviour of the world, as He underwent His bitter agony and passion. The appeal which is made to our moral constitution to suffer bravely and to dare, far surpasses in power any appeal of logic to our reason

or of muscle to our sense of might. Its strength does not lie solely in its own resources, but in trust in Providence. It has the promise of an angelic surrounding, and its eye of faith is open to see it. "When thou passest through the waters, *I* will be with thee." This is enough for its confidence. It keeps up its heart in the midnight gloom of its prison, and its songs issue from its cell into the outer apartment, where convicts listen with astonishment at its cheer.

"He who fears the gods," * said the ancient, "is to be feared himself." More are they that be with him than they that be against him. The Church, which is the company of all faithful people, is the Holy place of the Tabernacle of the Most High. "*God* is in the midst of her therefore shall she not be moved. God shall help her, and that right early. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea."

In the next place, a manly spirit is always a *true* spirit, equally free from affectation and deceit. It was the most welcome encomium that our Saviour could have bestowed upon the honest Nathaniel, to certify of him, that he was an "Israelite indeed, in whom was no guile." A character for simplicity is perhaps the most enviable that a person can covet. To be without

* "Δεινὸς ὃς Θεοὺς δέβει," quoted by Digby in "Broad Stone of Honor," vol. Godefridus, p. 6.

sham, without pretension, without laying claim to that which one is not in truth—to be open and transparent in conduct—belongs peculiarily to that description of a man which we denominate excellent.

And the reason why such a character is found in connection with a manly breast, is its consciousness of worth, and its having nothing to cover up from human view. Can any one respect his own manhood who acts the part of a cheat? Can there be in that heart any elements of greatness that is hypocritical in its expressions? By no means. The courtier, hiding his contempt or knavery under fair seeming disguise, and concealing the import of words under ambiguous language, may answer for a courtier alone, but not for a man. The religionist who justifies his arts by the desirableness of his ends, and first deceives, then perverts you, may be a very good Jesuit, but an equally hollow man. The charlatan, that palms off his specious show of learning, and makes dupes of pupils, and fools of admiring patients, may profit very much by the empiricism he practices, but only to lose much more of the credit of a true humanity. All counterfeits are made of base metal.

He who is puffed up by mere wealth and rank, and is inclined on their account to impose by the glamour of his position upon the gaping eyes of mankind, is an unreal man. He occupies no solid ground for dis-

tinction. He who sets himself off from his race in sympathy and association, is untrue to his nature. He trusts to artificial lines of separation. He is ignorant of himself, if he thinks that in any wise he is essentially superior to others. Some differences of culture, dissimilarity of tastes, neighborhood, kinship and the like may create circles and classes, but overlooking all such, in true greatness of spirit, he is without affectation in his intercourse with all sorts of people.

Nor less honest is a manly nature in the rebuke which it may be called to administer, or candid in the avowal of sentiments which it holds unfavorable to a neighbor. A soul that is truly reverent of itself can never be open to a suspicion of flattery. It can never give the impression of approval where it ought to pronounce a censure. It will not be silent about faults. If placed in the position of judge, it will not swerve from justice to gratify friendship, nor even at the expense of seeming harsh will it withhold the heaviest penalty of the law from heads that deserve it. A man that respects his image cannot act otherwise. He can run the risk of losing personal attachments and provoking against him a storm of criticism, because he has solid foundations upon which to retire. He can wait and will wait for the verdict of time.

> "He dares do all that may *become* a *Man*,
> Who dares do more, is none."

But in the third place, a genuine reverence for one's manhood produces generosity. A strong mind, like a strong arm, can afford to be noble. A powerful beast of the forest will not ordinarily engage with a mean antagonist. The old errant chief upon the field, about to run his tilt against an opposing hero, always gave him due notice, that he might not take advantage of unfair surprise. He who treads under foot that which lies at his mercy discovers unmanliness in the act. True greatness spurns the oppression of frailty. Great heads and great hearts almost uniformly go together. It is littleness that overbears, watches for weak places to assail them, picks at petty faults, is jealous of others' good-fortune and centres its thoughts on itself.

A robust and sinewy manhood always knits into its own texture more or less of tender and delicate feeling. There is no complete humanity without a large admixture of gentleness. Hardy and valiant spirits are held to be the stronger for this reunion. The majestic elm, swinging its graceful branches in the breeze, is the better able to cope with the tempest for the pliability of its boughs, which, when stiffened like the oak's, break and fall under the violence of the storm.

There is a common impression that there is something contradictory between this vigor and this delicacy; that these characteristic traits of a man and a

woman are incompatible with each other in one and the same person. But it has been justly observed, that "the manliest heart has often had the gentleness and tenderness of womanhood—nay, is far likelier," says the author of the "Guesses at Truth" (vol ii. p. 336), "than the effeminate to have it." "In the Life of Lessing," this author continues, "we are told that when Kleist, the German poet, who was a brave officer, was discontented at being placed over a hospital after the battle of Rossbach, Lessing used to comfort him with the passage in Xenophon's Cyropedia, which says that the bravest men are always the most compassionate; adding that the eight Pilgrims from Bremen and Lubeck, who went out to war against the enemy, on their first arrival in the Holy Land, took charge of the sick and wounded."

It is not without reason, I think, that the chivalrous character of knighthood was made to consist both in deeds of prowess and acts of humanity. The armed warrior in his saddle went forth to do battle for the honor of God and the good of his kind. His redoubtable valor was exerted in behalf of the feeble. He slew the Pagan and the Dragon, one of whom made havoc of the Church of God and the other of innocent victims. Wherever there was oppression to punish, or wrong to redress, or frailty to succor, there was the olden hero; and while his sword was wielded

in giant wrath, his hand was tender toward suffering and his ear was open to complaint. It was sought to combine in the idea of chivalry all that constitutes the typal Christian man. The brave, the powerful, the self-reliant knight bent with a meek devotion at the Altar of God, and paid seemly homage to true, but dependent woman.

But I point you to a better than any ideal type. I turn from chronicle and song to the inspired Gospel of Christ, and present to you Him, who though the Lord of glory, united with that majesty, which could awe the elements and strike terror into enemies, the mildness and love, that the bruised reed in its faintness could bear to feel and of which the smoking flax could perceive the touch without extinction.

I should linger, however, too long upon my theme, were I to expand, as it deserves, this lofty tone of Humanity to which a proper reverence of one's self legitimately leads. I should be glad to speak of that elevation of aim, of that nobility of mind, of that high Christian bearing—which appear as such—not in bravery alone, not in truth nor generosity alone—but in all which becomes a real and manly life. I would enlarge, if I could, on the jealous purity of a noble heart which is shocked at the idea of base contamination, and that vigilant self-control, which suffers no sapping by the low pleasures of the cup, of the vital-

ity of the body and the soundness and peace within it. I would also advert, did my limits allow me, to that masculine Faith, which confident of the ground on which it stands, is not shaken by doubts. Or if by mischance, some rude distrust jostle it from its poise, with the candor of honest Thomas, it is willing and ready to be set right again, and acknowledges its fresh convictions with something more than an admission of its former error. In the want of time so to do, I turn your attention to a brief bird's-eye survey of the influence of a right self-estimate upon a wholesome religious sentiment.

Piety, my brethren, is very apt to assume one of three forms—perhaps, I may add of four. It may be *superstitious*. It may run out into irrational notions and legendary myths. An intelligent and self-respecting manhood will certainly escape from this. It may be rigid, *ascetic* and *macerating to the flesh*. It may take on the fashion of the legal rather than the evangelical system. It may delight in voluntary humiliations and mortifications as such, which have little tendency to humble, but rather to degrade; which at the expense of true humility, foster a mean and servile spirit and take away the dignity of sonship. A manly and reverent piety is an effectual antidote to such a system. It may be *sentimental* and *æsthetic*. It may go no deeper than an impulse—a taste for the beauti-

ful and grand. It may find its food in unreal services, in sensuous gratifications of the idea of worship, in theoretical notions of the Church, or in bigoted holdings of the Truth as in Jesus. From such there is continual danger of reaction for their want of reality. For a soul once quickened to spiritual life is no longer content with æsthetical devotion, or barren ecclesiasticism and theology—but it yearns for communion with the Lord of truth. Not having been led to it in the Church itself, it may go beyond it—if perchance it discovers it in any outer circle, and thus it falls into schism. A robust and genuine manhood can never be satisfied with superficiality in religion, and therefore its piety can never be sentimental. It can never so pervert the institutions of Christ as to make them minister to its taste alone, and not to its higher life in God, and therefore, its own reverence of self is its best preservative from error.

But may not Religion degenerate or run riot in yet another direction? May it not become speculative? May it not wander into rationalism and a denial of the Faith? But what is the attitude of a devout Christian manhood in respect to the Author of its being, but that of filial veneration, an adoring recognition of His attributes, an affecting sense of its own littleness, a teachable disposition, a childlike trust? The deeper a man's sense of the dignity of his nature, the more

profound his estimate of the perfections of that Being, after whose likeness he was made. If he respect then his own intelligence, much more must he offer his homage to the Infinite Source of all wisdom and truth.

I have done now with my subject. Young brethren of the Church Association, and friends and hearers in the congregation to-night, let some fitting impression of a manly Christianity and its claims rest upon you all. I conclude with no little solemnity of interest the series of sermons to which your attention has been called. Reverence for God, reverence for Truth, reverence for Mankind and reverence for Self, are second to no others habits of mind which are binding upon you.

Be aspirants to a lofty and healthy religion. Be high toned and well balanced Christians. Be strong and show yourselves to be men. Seek through prayer, through Word and Sacrament, through intelligent inquiry, through thoughtful reflection and an earnest life, the noblest development of your being. Take the full armor of the faith fresh from the hand of Christ, as the ancient took his shield from his mother, and hear as you go a better than the injunction of the Roman matron, "By this conquer, or return upon it dead," even the animating promise from unerring lips, that never erred, "More than conquerors ye shall be."

SERMON XVIII.

ON THE DEATH OF PRESIDENT GARFIELD.

"*And all the people wept again over him.*"—2 SAMUEL iii. 34.

WHAT mean these badges of sorrow? Why are these signs of universal grief visible in our streets and in our harbor? Why this multitudinous gathering of people along the line of a procession that moves mournfully from the Capital over States and mountains to the distant lake-side? What clothes each face with sadness, and draws from each lip that speaks the expression of a sense of loss and bereavement—almost personal? Wherefore this utterance of sympathy from the Queen on her throne down to the humblest peasant under her sceptre? Why are two continents moved as never before to a fellowship of feeling and brought into an unwonted nearness to each other by a community of interest?

Is it because "a prince and a great man is fallen this day in Israel"? Yes. The Ruler of his people has died. The head of a noble Republic—of a fore-

most power in the world has been taken away. The chosen man of a commonwealth of States, the elected chief of his countrymen, ordained of God to rule over a nation that had raised him by its suffrages to his high and honorable position, is laid low. He, who was the peer of sovereigns and the associate of the mighty among kings and statesmen, has been stricken down.

But is this all? Is this the sufficient explanation of what we witness? Far from it.

David lamented over Abner—"the prince and great man" he pronounced him to be—not so much for his removal, as for the way it was brought about. "Died Abner as a fool dieth?" asked the king. "Thy hands were not bound, nor were thy feet put into fetters: as a man falleth before wicked men, so fellest thou."

The treacherous hand of Joab had stabbed Abner, when off his guard. Profoundly moved by this perfidy, so hideous and so vile, David lifted up his voice and wept bitterly by the grave of Abner, and all the people wept with him—and again they wept—as they reflected and entered more fully into the sentiment of their king, comprehending the grievous wrong that was done and the merit of the sufferer.

As President Garfield stepped forth one midsummer morning in quest of recreation, much needed, his

family at a distance expectant of him, his wife and children looking to join him on a journey which they had begun a little in advance,—in the flush of bright hope and happy expectation he was suddenly stopped; the fatal aim of a miscreant, who intended instant death, brought him to a bed of lingering suffering and waste, from which he could never rise up.

Had he expired at that hour, the people would have lamented him as all Israel lamented Abner.

But he was reserved for a loftier appreciation, and a more tender and abiding grief, as his admirable character should come to be more thoroughly understood and the full measure of the loss which threatened his country should be, though slowly, most vividly revealed to it in his chamber of sickness. Probably, no more striking manifestation of all that becomes a man and all that is attractive in home surroundings was ever made to the world, in the short but eventful period of eighty days—in the history of any mortal life.

The patience, the faith, the magnanimity and forgiveness, the tenderness of sentiment and the heroic courage of this extraordinary victim of cruel hands have commanded the admiration of the world. Toward that chamber of bodily distress the eyes of the public, not only near at hand, but far away have been reverently turned, only to learn new lessons of man-

hood and of the dignity of Christian suffering. Around that pillow a womanly presence has hovered, and domestic life has been seen, such as society needs much oftener to witness in order to know the true worth of a home that is graced by the loving wife and the child. Incidentally, the mother of the dying President has been introduced, and the affectionate solicitude of the son for his parent has been disclosed to view. The whole past of the man has been gradually admitted into the field of vision. The picture has been thrown back as we looked, until it embraces his boyhood, his humble birth, his brave struggles with difficulties, his aspirations for improvement, his early success, his marriage with modest and unpretending worth in the companion of his youth, his calls to academic and political duties, his services in the army, his career as a Statesman, his advancement to the office of Chief Magistrate in the government of his country, and his unbroken habits of scholarly study all along his way, and his never failing acknowledgments of duty to God, to Christ, and to his neighbor.

Surely, President Garfield has "died not as a fool dieth." A glamour, my friends, O no, not a glamour, but a real and living glory of wisdom and goodness has rested upon his bed, till little more could be asked for. He was not demonstrative in words but in acts. He was sanctified by prayers offered up for him every-

where, as prayers for one man never so abounded before. He was supported as man has seldom been supported by the grace of God. His religion was commended by his bright example. Men who doubted about prayer were glad to have it made for him, and felt secretly the consolation in spite of their speculative difficulties and distrusts.

Christianity won daily fresh respect and consideration from the pattern of a manly believer.

I cannot but think, that the best evidence possible of the efficacy of petition was afforded in the course of this memorable sickness, by the almost unparalleled good it wrought in divers ways, to the living and the dead.

To measure that good and comprehend it rightly, compare the effects which the immediate following of death upon the act of the assassin would probably have produced, with the effect of Providential continuance and support after that shot. See the consequences to the President in his purification by trial and the imperishability of his influence. See the softening power of this calamity on party animosities and sectional alienations. Observe what peace and harmony have ensued. If anything could have averted misfortune that was feared, and quieted men's minds in view of possible changes in the administration of affairs, it is the sobering, solemnizing impression under

which every citizen has come in the ordering of Unfailing Wisdom. To no one was it given, my brethren, to foresee the footsteps of Divine Providence in this critical juncture.

Observe also the closer and more friendly ties that have been knit by this event between our country and the whole civilized world. Our nation has been exalted, and the form of our Government has been commended to other powers and peoples by the admirable bearing of a man, its most fitting representative, who from among the multitude came up to be the leader of its hosts.

Some persons have said in their thoughtlessness, that the denial of restoration to health in answer to many prayers for the President's life is a sore objection to the prevalence of such prayers with God. But these persons forget, that all petitions are conditioned upon the good pleasure of God and are urged in submission to His holy will. Besides, they are requests with an alternative suit, an asking not merely for prolongation of life—but for peaceful departure, should life be taken away, and for immortal blessedness. And that, most certainly, is the plainest proof that Prayer has power, when its answer comes in clothing the sufferer with Christlike virtues, and surrounding him with the endearments of domestic sweetness and devotion, which opportunely and im-

pressively teach the world that pure Religion is a *reality*.

Another thing that strikes me in the very remarkable sickness of the late President Garfield is the light it throws upon the value of Character.

And what I mean by character is the formation of habits of self-government and elevation of aim, which makes a man, under Grace, equal to any demand that may Providentially be laid upon him. President Garfield did not bound at once into the high type of manhood which he was enabled to show, so unexpectedly to society at large. He was not suddenly changed into another man by visitation. The bullet of the wretch that shot him carried with it no spiritual emollient to soften his feelings toward the miserable aggressor, and to prevent the thought of resentment by instilling charity. The fervors of a burning summer were not calculated to nurture patience in the confinement of a heated room in the White House, and to breed submission under painful disappointments, when nature craved rest, and nerves out of tune from overpressure upon them could hardly be at peace. Forgiveness of injury grew out of a previous greatness of soul, and silence in respect to the offender was the fruit of that same discipline of self which saved him from murmuring and repining under other discomforts.

A man can be a hero for an hour or a day, when all around are gazing at him, and when his personal or official dignity demands it of him—but to continue such a part, from week to week, unbroken and unflagging, is not in the power of any man who has been unschooled by adversity. Moral and spiritual attainment is like all other attainment, the fruit of culture.

President Garfield began life in very lowly circumstances. His lot was poor. He had a mother who, like his wife, is an honor to her sex. She early inspired him with the fear of God, and, no doubt, with much of his early ambition. He was eager for an education—for its own sake—and not simply, it would appear, for the respectability of learning or for the high places it might purchase. He was anxious to be what it becomes a boy and a man to be, in the thorough development of his powers as well as in the government of his passions and propensities. In search of this education he followed the towpath on a canal for the sake of acquiring means. He assisted himself through college by teaching. He forgot not his religious in attention to his intellectual life. Twelve miles, we are told, he walked of a Sunday in order to receive his spiritual nurture in the sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ. He was a preacher as well as a teacher, subsequently: and in that Christian denomination to which he was early attached, he con-

tinued an active and consistent member through all after years. I need not follow him into the Academy, the Army, the Senate Chamber and the Presidential Chair; nor need I say, that the characteristic energy and boldness of his youth, and the deep-rooted principles by which that youth was governed, never failed to control him in riper manhood, nor to grow with his growth, and to strengthen with his strength.

And I beg you to remark, that these distinguishing traits, with the added accomplishment of a gentle and loving spirit—are the things now thought of, are the points of attraction in his person and history — in comparison with which his talents and acquirements, his gifts of eloquence, his administrative ability and his elevated place are of no account whatever in the view of the world.

That which will give him immortality of fame is Character. The greatness of President Garfield, like the grandeur of Washington, is pre-eminently moral. When his government is forgotten, and all his honors have passed out of remembrance—the dutiful son, the devoted husband and father, the faithful friend, the unblemished Christian, the brave, magnanimous and heroic martyr will be cherished in the heart of hearts of many generations that will rise up and call him blessed.

I present this example to young men. I hold it up

to you as an incentive to become all you are capable of being in an elevated and sanctified order of humanity. Aim at true Manhood. Aim at a Christ-like perfection. Aim at a Character which commands the approbation of this world and of a better.

And now let me pause for a moment upon one other fact that has suggested itself to me in connection with this sad bereavement, namely, the peculiarly near relation in which we stand to our appointed rulers.

How constant and affectionate has been the anxiety every day, which we have felt for the departed! Our inquiry has been no cold and formal one for the condition of his wound. Our entreaty for his recovery has been no matter of rote. We have repeated that Collect, in which we commend the President of these United States to God, with all that are in authority over us, in a spirit of unwonted pathos. We have been made painfully sensible, how valuable to ourselves is the life of our Chieftain—how much has depended, and must always depend upon it—how far-reaching a calamity might prove which should take him from us, and how important that shield which we should ever throw around him, by our sympathy, our vigilance, our intercessory offices and our earnest co-operation as loyal citizens under him. The rule of President Garfield has given place to that of his succes-

sor, for which we should solemnly and fervently pray —that it may be wise and patriotic and prosperous.

It was said of our lamented leader, that he sometimes erred. What wonder! Is any man above mistakes? Those mistakes are all condoned in admiration of the earnestness and sincerity of his course—and his courage under affliction.

When men begin to pray for another, they will not often make account of short comings.

Let us learn to uphold as we ought those who are entrusted with the reins of government. Let us observe to-morrow with unfeigned humiliation for our own deficiencies and faults in the past, and with hearty supplication for our Chief Magistrate and his Counsellors in all time to come.

And here leaving ourselves, and every thought of the living, except to commit them to God, who alone can give wisdom, and strength, and consolation and peace—wisdom and strength to His servants, and consolation and peace to the widow, the childless and the fatherless in their tender grief—let us follow the illustrious dead to the last holy offices which yet remain to be done.

"Mourn for the man of long enduring blood,

* * * * * * *

Whole in himself, a common good.

* * * * * * *

Whose life was work, whose language rife
With rugged maxims hewn from life ;
Who never spoke against a foe ;
* * * * * * *
———and while we hear
The tides of Music's golden sea
Setting toward eternity,
Uplifted high in heart and hope are we,
Until we doubt not that for one so true
There must be other nobler work to do.
* * * * * * *
For tho' the Giant Ages heave the hill
And break the shore, and evermore
Make and break, and work their will ;
Tho' worlds on worlds in myriad myriads roll
Round us, each with different powers,
And other forms of life than ours,
What know we greater than the soul ?
On God and Godlike men we build our trust.
Hush ! the Dead March wails in the people's ears :
The dark crowd moves, and there are sobs and tears:
The black earth yawns ; the mortal disappears."

SERMON XIX.

"STAND IN THY LOT AT THE END OF THE DAYS."

"But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days."—DAN. xii. 13.

IT is natural for man to desire a knowledge of what is coming to pass, to wish to be informed of the issue of events, both in his own history and in the history of whatever interests his mind. He would unravel the problem of his destiny, see what is before him, what is going to be the end of his endeavors and achievements, and particularly the outcome of his struggle with difficulties. He would forecast, if he could, the horoscope of his fortune, and when days are dark, descry, if it were possible, some light in the future to give him cheer.

Nor is such an interest limited to one's individual welfare. Nor to the welfare of one's children or friends. But it is often most alive to the good of one's country, the prosperity of the Church, and the onward march of the world in civilization and improvement. The good citizen and the good Christian are

concerned for the stability of national institutions and the perpetuity of civil and religious privileges; and the lover of his race watches both with delight and solicitude the attainments of mankind in the arts and discoveries and elevating appliances of an age of progress. Such men would be happy, if they had the prospect before they die of revisiting the world at some future period, when events have ripened into a more perfect accomplishment. One philosopher, at least, had ventured an experiment whereby life could be resuscitated after its suspension by death, and the inmate of the grave could be replaced, as it were, in these mortal surroundings, when two or three centuries had passed over him in the silence of the sepulchre.

Prophets and Kings, we are told, "desired" earnestly "to see" the day and things of Christ in advance of their coming. The prophets "searched diligently" to understand "what the Spirit which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow." They wanted to discern themselves what they foretold for others, and share in the vision, which it was reserved for a later posterity to enjoy.

To the last of the great Seers of Israel there was unfolded in a marvellous manner the map of future empires. Under striking figures and symbols, Daniel, the prophet-statesman of Babylon, was permitted to

behold a grand succession of kingdoms, rising in order, one after another down the long vista of time, the Chaldean giving place to the Persian, the Persian to the Grecian, and the Grecian to the Roman, and in the midst of the career of the latest dynasty, a power altogether unique, a government and a kingdom different from all the rest, making its appearance, which should survive and prosper and establish itself forever, when the rest should lie in ruins. Here was a startling and most stupendous disclosure. It perplexed the mind of the Prophet. His spirit was grieved at some of the aspects of the picture, and with some delighted. He was distressed at the bearing of events upon his own, the chosen people of God, and altogether confounded by the obscurity and mystery of the revelation he saw. He would fain comprehend more and discover the end to which all tended. But it was not permitted. He could not have understood it properly, had he been told. He must grow to it. It must come to be apprehended by actual experience in later hours.

"Go thou thy way till the end be." It will explain itself. It will be made intelligible by its taking place. Every man knows that his insight into the future is limited. Things that have been wont to happen and things that come to pass by regular sequence, he may anticipate as likely or sure to be repeated. But

beyond this little field of calculation he must be ignorant.

He has his part to do. He is a worker in his day. He can help to set forward in the narrow circle of his influence the advancing movement, or help to hold back the tendency to an opposite quarter; but at length he grows weary. He gets tired and feels his weakness. He is worn out perhaps by the friction of life and the decay of nature.

Now rest becomes welcome at the last. It is an agreeable intelligence, "Thou shalt rest;" for he needs the change, the reprieve, the repose. It is rest for the suffering body and the over taxed brain—rest from the toils and the burdens of earth—not necessarily rest for the higher nature of man in another state of being, which may be, and probably is, delightfully active, but a falling into slumber, so far as respects this world, from the fatigue and exhaustion of the flesh and the spirit.

"Thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days."

There is something in these closing words which is indicative to my mind of the doctrine of a Resurrection and a reappearance of the dead in certain relations to the living from whom they have been temporarily parted. The ties would not seem to be destroyed which connect the resting with the active.

Their *lot*, their place remains for them into which they shall enter again. It will not simply be their privilege, as the words are commonly understood, to be established in that state of reward and felicity for which they are qualified—and that on the termination of their mortal life. But more than this, they will be restored, as it were, to their relative position among mankind, and stand again in their lot—the place assigned to them and prepared for their occupancy "at the end" of "days."

Nothing seems to be more evident, from the general tenor of Revelation, than that the members of the human family, early and late, are bound together as a unit; that the fathers are still fathers—though they have disappeared from earth, and that descendants are acknowledged, even by the Almighty, as the children of their sires, who are encouraged to appeal to the God of their fathers—of Abraham, for example, and Isaac and Jacob—with the distinct assurance that they shall be remembered for their fathers' sake, and that once more they shall see these progenitors, and sit down with them at length in the Kingdom of God, as heirs together of Immortality, and inseparable members of the same Household of God.

Is it possible to think that the departed are uninterested in the welfare of survivors? The angels, their companions and attendants, watch continually

over the world—even over its empires, according to prophecy—but especially and very plainly over its children and those in need; and their study is the unfolding of the secret wisdom of God in the history of the Church, into which, with the mysteries of Redeeming mercy, they desire and delight to look.

It cannot be that the spirits of the faithful are denied a share in their knowledge, and that they feel less interest.

The world of disembodiment is not a place of stationary things, in which those resting from their labors make no farther progress in purity and intelligence until the Judgment. It is undoubtedly a place of growth. There is one little incident related in the Gospels which throws light, I think, on this interesting matter. We are told by the Evangelists, that in the Mount of Transfiguration, when our Lord for a moment was beheld in glory, that there appeared with Him in vision, Moses, the lawgiver, and Elijah, the reformer, and they were heard by the disciples earnestly "talking with Jesus." And what was the subject of conversation? It was His "decease" or sacrifice which He should "shortly accomplish at Jerusalem." When Moses and Elias were on earth, they taught the people of a Saviour—under the form of a prophet like unto the former, who was yet to come—and by types and offerings, they hinted obscurely at

His Atonement. But they had no idea, while in the flesh, of the then unrevealed manner in which He would work out His beneficent mission. The thought of His *decease*, the anticipation of His suspension on the cruel Cross—His lifting up in death that He might thereby draw all men unto Him—was the farthest from entering into their minds. Where had they learned anything more fully? Clearly, in Paradise. They had come to understand *there*, more of the wonders of Redemption, and they came with avidity to the Mount, when allowed to do so, to converse with the Adorable Saviour of the world—of that consummation of His work—or rather, that most indispensable and inscrutable step, His death—to His consummate work in His Resurrection, Ascension and Exaltation in Heaven. Had it been theirs to hold communion with Jesus, with only the imperfect knowledge which they possessed on earth, they might have been wondering listeners, but not at all competent sharers in His glory, entering into the spirit of His anticipations and undertakings for Man.

And with that same Saviour, be it once for all understood, that those who depart hence in the Lord are immediately and always united—that absence from the body is to them—presence with Himself; and can it be doubted, that while He is superintending and interceding for His Church, upholding its ministry,

setting forward its extension and tenderly caring as a Shepherd for every humble and dependent disciple—that they are impressed by Him with something of His acquaintance with human affairs and of His sympathy with feeble mortals? Can it be questioned by any, that the ministering angels of the faithful communicate of their intelligence to the spirits of the just made perfect? Or that daily and hourly arrivals, at that Home of Rest, of the Redeemed from among men, fail to bring them some tidings of the state of survivors?

They grow in wisdom *there*, no doubt, as men grow *here*, and in every grace; and their stature is ripening from stage to stage, as they go onward—and fully abreast will they be found of the advancement of the Church and the world, even in respect of what relates to time, when in the process of redemption they shall again be brought in contact with people that have come after them. Daniel will not reappear, when the new heavens and new earth shall take the place of these. The same Daniel with partial knowledge that died twenty-four hundred years ago. Moses and Elias, Abraham and the patriarchs, and Adam and Enoch, and Noah still earlier, will not return to our sight in the revelation of the future, the dimly enlightened and imperfectly sanctified believers that they must necessarily have been in days remotely antecedent to the coming of

Christ. No prophets, no kings, who once desired to see, but died without the sight, will be brought again from their resting places, unblest until then, with the vision of Messiah.

No; they will stand rightly in their lot, at the head of the advancing column.

They will have kept up with the improvement and elevation of mankind. At least, will have *kept up.* And when the days are ended and time shall be no longer, they shall be found fitted for the privilege, which it will be theirs and ours to enjoy with all the people of God—in a re-united and re-constituted society, for a fresh and happier earth, the counterpart of this.

Beautiful and glorious thought! Incomparable prospect! May it be the blessedness of us all and of all people to have a part in it.

I look around, my brethren, to these worthy mementoes and memorials of the beloved dead,* and seem to see in their design, so tastefully executed and so richly ornamented, an illustration of the truth I have sought to utter. In their uppermost tracery, behold the cherubim and seraphim and the winged angels of heaven—those elder born than ourselves—who, while celebrating and magnifying the glorious

* In reference to Memorial windows recently placed in Grace Church, Baltimore.

Name of God, have been immemorially and still continue to be the favored witnesses of God's works, and the trustful spectators of events down through the annals of history. They were present to adore when the morning stars first sang together, and the earth from its nebulous chaos began to take form and life. They walked with our first parents in Eden, and held converse with Abraham on Mount Moriah. They marched before Israel on her escape from the land of pyramids and palaces, dwelt by her captive children in haughty Babylon, saw Assyrian and Mede and Macedonian, Egyptian and Roman, successively prosper and fall—and through all changes have been guardians and helpers of the Church of Christ in its establishment and increase on earth, and the advancement of its faithful to their rest in Paradise.

Beneath them, behold typical representatives of the fathers and leaders of the Church. Moses with his tables of the Law. David with his minstrelsy of Worship, and Isaiah with his scroll of Revelation: (these among the Prophets,) then St. Peter with insignia of Authority, St. John, with the cup of Immortality, and St. Paul with the Word, the mighty sword of the Spirit, which he wielded as a Preacher: (these among Apostles.) And last, St. Stephen, the young Hebrew deacon, proto-martyr to Jesus, St. James the son of Zebedee, brother of St. John, who was early beheaded,

and Polycarp the blessed, first doomed to the lions, afterwards consigned to the flames for not consenting to deny his Redeemer, (these among Martyrs.) Along a lengthened stretch of time, covering somewhat more than fifteen hundred years, they once lived. Eighteen centuries have since passed. Kingdoms and potentates they saw that have left no successors. The Church from a feeble rill has grown into a majestic stream, irrigating the earth and distributing its waters into all lands, since the last of them fell on sleep.

Beneath these transparent figures are recorded the names of remote descendants of them. Bishop Claggett, Bishop Whittingham and Bishop Atkinson, whose lives spanned a century of our ecclesiastical existence. They were made observers, and actors also, in a day still in progress.

We survive *them.* Thus the story runs on. We erect our monuments to chief pastors we have loved, and whose teachings and examples we wish ever to have in remembrance. But they have ceased from among men. So we also shall cease to live. As they were witnesses for a time, so are we for awhile. What the future has in reserve we cannot anticipate. The world will keep moving, and the Church thriving and declining, gaining ground and sometimes losing, long after we are gone. We shall rest. We shall require the rest. It will be better for us to rest here, that we

may revive and recover in some other abode. Our bodies and our infirmities shall cease to be, our spirits shall live, our flesh shall fall asleep in hope of resuscitation, but our souls shall mount up, no longer encumbered by the burden of weakness, and ascend daily to new heights of contemplation and improvement. Meanwhile the unsleeping, faithful Providence of God will be accomplishing its purposes of mercy to man.

At the end of the days we shall all stand in our lot. We shall in the interim have grown in spiritual and moral stature, and no doubt in intellectual. We shall have been carried forward together and upward, like the pupils of probation.

How delightful the anticipation of being once more united with the departed, and of being joined to humanity, restored whole as before — the Incarnate Saviour, realizing the effect of His Incarnation in all regenerate spirits, and Mankind, as the crown of this world's creation, made an immortal imperishable and inseparable unit forever!

Oh, let it be ours to be making progress, while we live, toward this high destiny. Let it be ours to begin that life of piety in this world, that will be continued in the next, according to the promise, he that is holy shall be holy still. Put not off repentance until death. Think not in the grave to be reformed from that to which you have moulded and trained your being in

the flesh. Remember that moral and religious directions, and so immoral and sinful, follow out their tendency almost as a matter of course. Seek to live the life that you may die the death of the righteous. Strive to lie down in God's likeness, that you may awake in the same. And that you may be faithful even unto death, keep this before you, that you shall *rest*—rest from anxiety, "rest" from toil and rest from sin, and shall as assuredly "stand in your lot at the end of the days."

SERMON XX.

SUBORDINATION INVOLVED IN THE CHRISTIAN IDEA OF THE TRINITY.

"*My Father is greater than I.*"—St. John xiv. 28.

You will deem this a strange selection, perhaps, from which to set forth the proper Divinity of Christ; the doctrine of the Trinity which the Church celebrates to-day being based upon the Oneness in the Godhead of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; their having the same nature, the same essence and attributes. As the Creed expresses it in respect to the Only Begotten, He is "of *one Substance* with the Father." And yet our Saviour declares in unmistakable terms, "My Father is *greater* than I;" from which an inference has been drawn, quite adverse to the doctrine of the Creed, and incompatible with it.

Can it escape the notice of any attentive inquirer, that this very comparison of Himself with God is suggestive of the doctrine of their inscrutable unity? What would be thought of either angel or man who should take upon himself to affirm, "The Father is

greater than I!" Would there be any danger of a contrary inference if he should omit to forestall it? Would it strike the auditor, that there was either reason or propriety in such a declaration from a created being?

You observe too that the Saviour employs language in the text which implies a peculiarity in His relation to the Highest. He does not say 'that God is to Him superior,' or in the general phrase of children, '*The* Father excels,' but "*My Father* is greater than I." It is always appropriate that the son should resemble the parent, and approximate to him in dignity.

"My Father is greater than I," is, rightly construed, an irrefragable argument in favor of Christ's proper Divinity. It assumes for a base a common level of measurement. It brings the two into the nearest possible approach to one another. It is a comparison between likes. It is not all Deity on the one side, and only human or angelic on the other; for then there would be contrast, not comparison: and the mind of creatures would be shocked by the suggestion of any sort of approach, however distant, to Godhead.

It is easy to say, that the Apostles, being ignorant and superstitious men, were so inclined to exalt their Master that He was obliged to guard them against idolatry, by averring his inferiority to the Father.

But whence came the impressions of His exalted

character—allowing for a moment that the assertion is true? Whence, but from witnessing His works and ministry, from listening to His doctrine, and knowing His life? How is it that we, and every reverent reader who ponders over the pages of the Gospel, are not offended by the saying of Jesus, "My Father is greater than I?" Why is no thought of presumption and arrogance in the Speaker suggested to us? Why, but for the reason that the rest of the Record is consonant with the idea that He is God? All is harmonious and in keeping with this.

You see that the Divine Titles are applied to Christ without exception. The Divine attributes and works are ascribed unreservedly to Him. You read the declaration of the Scripture, "No man knoweth who the Son is save the Father, nor who the Father is save the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him." There is a mystery about the one which corresponds to the mystery about the other, and you can no more penetrate the former than the latter.

The first theory of the world was, Well, around the humanity of the Saviour, God has thrown a special radiance of Divinity. There is a special endowment of Jesus of Nazareth with the perfections of wisdom, holiness and power, and an appointment to act as God's vicegerent, and to 'manifest forth His Glory.' This would answer our purpose but for the discovery of the

Gospel that He existed before His coming upon the earth.

Before Abraham was He lived. He enjoyed the love of the Father before the foundation of the world, and shared His glory. He was not a human being who took on Him Divinity, but He was a Divine who took Humanity upon Him. And however as man He "received gifts" from above, that which enabled Him to exercise the prerogative and to exhibit the nature of the Father, was His own original capacity, "as God manifest in the flesh."

Men then resorted to the conjecture, that this pre-existent Redeemer was a sort of inferior Deity. He was God, but not equal to the Father. There are two Gods, a supreme and a subordinate—which is plainly in conflict with the revelation of Truth that there is but one God, and He will not give His glory to another.

To what are we forced? We are obliged to admit the essential unity in nature of both the Father and the Son; and then in explanation of the language of the text, we seek the ground of the disparity which we find in the relations of the two, in consequence of a change to which the Son has submitted for accomplishing the work of our Redemption.

Do we know much of God except in connection with the Economy of Grace? What the eternal re-

lations of the Persons of the Trinity are we cannot begin to fathom. We know that the Son is begotten from eternity, and that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son—but what "begotten" is, and what "procession" is, we cannot explain. We can form no idea of the Trinity independently of its manifestations in the salvation of man.

And therefore we lay down as a settled truth, that the subordination of the Son, as affirmed in the Scripture, is accounted for by the position to which the Only Begotten of the Highest has stooped for us in the capacity of Mediator and Redeemer.

If it had not been, my brethren, for the occasion to recover the lost, the Trinity of the Godhead might never have been revealed, at least, upon earth. We might never have heard of the distinction of Father, Son, and Spirit. It would have been an abstraction in Divinity impossible perhaps to disclose. There would have been no practical utility and benefit in the knowledge of it. We might have been told of the distinction, but it would have been to us no distinction. For separate all you have learned in connection with the Story of Human Recovery,—of Christ's descent from Heaven, of His becoming incarnate, dying, rising again, returning to the skies to intercede, and from thence to proceed to judgment, and what is there left? And separate from the Spirit His regenerating and

sanctifying offices, and His appearance at Pentecost in fulfilment of the promise, and how much do you comprehend of His being besides?

You know that Jesus the Messiah is indeed Divine; and you know the Holy Ghost is Divine. You cannot resist the evidence of the mysterious union with the Father in one substance or essence—and in explanation of this union it is told you, They are begotten of Him, not made—or they proceed forth from Him. Of this Tri-Unity in itself you have not the faintest conception.

The idea of the Trinity—rather of the "Persons" who constitute it—has been received through the record of the Gospel. And by the record of the Gospel which unfolds to human view the appearance and agency of Father, Word and Holy Ghost in the salvation of the sinner, this idea is limited.

Now, what is the Gospel development of the "Mystery of Godliness"? It is in brief, that "God was manifest in the flesh." Whatever is valuable and appreciable and intelligible in the revelation of the Deity circles around this central fact. We see in this revelation the Only Begotten Son leaving the glory which he had with the Father before the world was, 'and for us men and our salvation coming down from Heaven.' Though He thought it not robbery to be equal with God, yet He made Himself of no reputa-

tion, and took upon Him the form of a servant. Conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary, He became a Man. He united to His divine a human nature, perfect and complete, though exempt from sin. In one single Person He wedded Godhead and humanity; so that though He was on earth, He was still by His divinity at the same time "in Heaven." He was brought into closest contact with manhood, and yet He was no less linked to the perfections of the Infinite. As man He grew in wisdom. The Spirit was given from above without measure unto Him. He was obedient, and suffering, and frail. He was made in all points like as we are save in the matter of sin. But as God He was One with the Father. The works that the Father did He did also. All power was given unto Him both in heaven and on earth. The offer of prayer to the Father in His effectual name He promised *Himself* to answer, and He pledged His presence to His faithful people, wherever two or three should meet together, thus evincing His consciousness of Omnipresence and Omniscience.

But for what purpose was this union of Divinity with Manhood? Wherefore was the Word made flesh when the fulness of the time had come?

It was to restore our nature through its assumption by the Saviour. It was to set a faultless example by the living Pattern of One who was perfect Man as

well as perfect God. It was to make Atonement for sin by His vicarious death; the dignity and glory of the Sufferer lending an unspeakable value to His passion upon the tree. It was to assure us of the tender sympathy of our Advocate, His being touched in all points with a feeling of our infirmities, and to "draw us with the cords of love and with the bands of a brother." It was to make manifest to us the Father in all the tenderness as well as holiness of His nature. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only Begotten which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared Him." The Son hath come forth from His invisible presence, and His intimate communion, the Express Image of His person. He that hath seen the Son hath seen the Father also. The craving of the lawgiver is the common craving of the race, to behold Jehovah. We fain would perceive with our eyes. We would have all the glory of the Lord palpably pass before us. We are not content, sinners as we are, with the evidence which His works afford, or our own hearts afford of His character and will. Pantheism does not satisfy. We want to look upon His person as He reveals Himself in His condescending and Incarnate Son. If Jesus were not verily "God manifest in the flesh," if He were no Outshining of Jehovah's glory, He could be neither a competent Mediator responding to the wants of the human soul, nor for the work of our salva-

tion. He must have been verily Divine and verily Human.

That compound Being whom we recognize in Immanuel, equally God and equally man, stands on a lower step of the Throne as our Advocate and Lord. Not simply in His human nature does He say, "My Father is greater than I"—but in His mysterious relation to the Father in the economy of grace; as the condescending Son, as the incarnate Logos, as both God and Man.

While He abode here upon His footstool, the *human* element in Him prevailed largely in its manifestations, over the Godlike. He was here to suffer, to be obedient, to take the part and experience of man. He laid aside for a while "the form of God," and stooped to the condition of a creature and servant. But when He returned to the Highest, the Godlike began to prevail. On the eve of His departure from the world, He prayed, "I have *finished* the work which Thou hast given me to do; and now, O Father, glorify Thou me with Thine own self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." "He that descended first into the lower parts of the earth, the same also ascended far above all heavens—that He might fill all things." "God also," for His humility and His obedience unto death, "gave Him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee

should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth—and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." The Lord said unto (this) Lord, "Sit Thou on my *right hand* until I make thine enemies Thy footstool." Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, He shed forth the Spirit.* He came to us and still comes, by this Spirit, with the Father, to take up His abode in believing hearts. He is associated in all blessing with the Triune. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" is a component part of the Christian benediction, as much as "the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost." His title is recognized in that inscrutable name by which we are baptized—"the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." He is the Medium of prayer, but He is also its Answerer. "Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will *I* do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." "If ye shall ask anything in My name, *I* will do it."

"As Thou Father art in *Me*, and I in *Thee*," He prays, that "they also may be One in us, that the world may believe that Thou didst send me."

From these several testimonies is it not evident that the Godlike element in our Saviour Christ shone pre-

* "If I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you: but if I depart, *I* will send Him unto you."

eminently forth after His Ascension, that His oneness with the Deity then became conspicuous? And yet is *He not still* both God and man, retaining in Himself the substance of our nature in conjunction with a higher? Have we not a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, there to appear in the Divine Presence for us? And does He not live continually to intercede, continually to intervene between the Creator and the creature? There is a *Superior* above and an *inferior* below. He is Himself the Mediator. We look up through Him to the Father, though we associate with Him infinite perfections. *Subordination* is inseparable from the idea of *mediatorial* character. Disclosed as the Trinity is through the acts and offices which are necessary to our redemption, it cannot be otherwise than that He who becomes our Advocate should point upward to a Being, in his position as our Advocate, who is "*greater than* He."

And now let us look at the words of our text. The Saviour, as I have stated, was on the eve of consummating the errand which He was sent into the world to complete. He was near to the lowest point of His earthly humiliation, being about to be crucified. Anticipating, however, a speedy re-assumption of the honors which He had foregone for a time, and an entrance into Heaven, there to present His sacrifice,

prepare for us a place and send forth the earnest of the Holy Ghost, He remarked to His disciples, "If ye loved Me ye would rejoice because I said, I go unto the Father; for my Father is greater than I."

Truly there was occasion for rejoicing! He was about to be glorified and to be exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour! Surely the Father was greater in that hour of abasement. His dearly beloved Son, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, was waiting to be crowned. As that Compound Being, who in His Divinity proper was equal with God, but whose Divinity was linked in One person inseparably to our Humanity, He stood by the footstool of the Throne, and looking above announced to His anxious twelve, "My Father is greater than I."

How reasonable and how consistent! How fitting such a declaration to His lips! Upon any other supposition than that He was God as well as man, how monstrous such a comparison of Himself with the Infinite! How justly open to the charge of blasphemous arrogance and impiety!

But let me caution you, after contemplating, brethren, this voluntary condescension of the Son of God, against suffering yourselves to rob Him of His merited worship, against disparaging His title to Divinity, and contrary to His express assertion of the will of the Highest, in assigning to Him the offices which God

alone can perform, of Quickener of the dead, and Final Judge, refusing to honor the Son even as you honor the Father.

The Church throughout the length and breadth of Christendom to-day acknowledges the glory of the Eternal Trinity. Her song this morning, as on every occasion of Eucharistic blessing, is unitedly offered, "Thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art *most high* in the glory of God the Father." The congregations of her worshippers, in token of their faith and adoration, bow reverently at the name of Jesus in the rehearsal of their Belief.

Many a Thomas has worshipfully exclaimed, and without rebuke, as he has fallen before the Saviour, whom at first he doubted, "My Lord! and my God!" And not one Stephen only, but a noble army of Martyrs,—has, in the last act of expiring nature, committed the keeping of the soul to the charge of the Lord Jesus in Heaven.

The model of all Christian and acceptable worship is seen in the revelation of the worship of Angels, who, joined with holy Saints, ascribe, "Blessing, and honor, and glory and power unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever."

Let us imbibe the spirit of these instructive examples. Let us never fall below the standard which is set up before our eyes both in the Gospel and in the

Church. Let us not be troubled at the essential mystery of the Godhead; but rejoicing that we know something of an explanation for those acts and sayings in which the Son of the Highest declares His Father to be greater than He, rejoice also that we know that the same Saviour hath told us, "I and my Father are One."

The work of Creation and Providence, and the work of Re-creation, or Redemption and Moral Renewal are alike Divine. When I think of the Great God, making all things out of nothing, and upholding them by the Word of His power, I prostrate myself as a dependent creature with all humility before Him, and acknowledge to His glory, that in Him alone I live, and move, and have my being. When I contemplate His Only Begotten Son, veiling the perfections of Deity, and descending from heaven to earth—that He might raise us in turn through His humiliation and Cross to a share in His nature, I embrace Him and I praise Him as my Restorer from the Fall. And when I perceive the Holy Spirit of grace sent as "another Comforter" from the skies, and experience in my heart the need as well as the fruition of His enlightening, converting and sustaining influence, I cannot refrain from uniting an ascription to my Sanctifier with the tribute of my adoration to the Ever Blessed Trinity:—saying in the language of the olden Church, "Glory be to

the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end;" and when in one view, comprehending the Father who hath loved, the Son who hath saved, and the Holy Ghost who doth comfort, I undistinguishingly acknowledge them as workers together in the great work of Redemption, I render, as did the Apostle, "To the King Eternal, Immortal, Invisible, the *only* wise God," our *Saviour*, "be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen."

SERMON XXI.

PASSED FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE.

"*Passed from death unto life.*"—ST. JOHN v. 24.

THESE words have been brought to mind, while watching the return of life and loveliness upon the face of nature. "Lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone, the flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land." On every side there is now a reviving once more from the slumber of Death. The bands of the grave are broken.

If we had been called to witness for the first time, my hearers, this change of aspect—after having seen the landscape grow dry and sear, and the leaves fall from the trees, how should we feel the force of the application which I have made of the Scripture—"Passed from death unto life"! Here, where there has been cold, is now returning warmth. Here, where the fields had been shorn of beauty, and the forests had stood up like so many naked monuments over the

graves of the dead, is now the springing of verdure. Here, where the birds were no longer vocal, is the voice of melody. The whole air is full of music, and life, life is germinating in every part.

And so will it be, my friends, on the morning of the Resurrection. What a type and a promise is this, of the final Easter! There will then be vigor springing out of decay—beauty bursting forth from the drear confines of the tomb, that waste shall never impair, nor death overtake again.

We can hardly repress the thought, as we see the transition that is going on around us, how soon this loveliness will all pass away. Our fears and our regrets disturb our joy. We behold before us the image of our mutability. We flourish ourselves like a flower of the field; the wind passeth over us and we are gone —and the place we occupy shall know us no more forever. But there is a prospect which lies beyond the grave, over which no changes sweep their shadow —and no lesson of frailty is read to man.

> "There *everlasting Spring* abides,
> And never fading flowers:
> Death, like a narrow stream, divides
> This heavenly land from ours."

When we shall have reached that, my brethren, we shall have "passed indeed from death unto life." There are many points of resemblance to the passage

from this state to the better, of hope in the revelations of nature which we annually observe—and which for our instruction and comfort we may do well to notice.

In the first place, there is an interval between death and the resurrection, as between the fall and spring. It is the grave in the one case that bridges over this chasm, and winter in the other. It does not seem to be the pleasure of God that decline and reviving should follow together—that the twilight which fades in the evening heavens should immediately precede the return of day. No, there is a *night*—a long night to divide. The lamp of life that goes out in decease, does not at once re-illumine its temple. The flower dies to the ground, and for the appointed period of revolving suns ceases to appear upon the soil that fed it.

But in the second place, my friends, there is no destruction of life, either in the winter or in the grave. The life that is withdrawn from its outward manifestations is taken back into the earth, just as the Spirit is taken back unto the God who gave it, and works in new modes or appears in new forms which are invisible, perchance, to mortal eyes. There is not a particle of existence that is ever destroyed. Not even matter is annihilated. The structure only is changed. Solids are converted into fluids, and fluids into gases,

and the latter, as real and material in their composition as even the former, for that they consist of is convertible again. The most etherial essence may be reduced to a substance. The most rigid of substances may be held in solution in some liquid element; you cannot see it with your eyes, you cannot conceive of its condition, and yet a slight shaking of the vessel which contains the lymph, (if we may use the term,) shall cause this same undiscernible matter to deposit in crystals as hard as adamant. This shows that it is the structure, and not the globe itself that dissolves. It is the "*fashion* of this world," in the discriminating language of the Scripture, that passes away.

And if it be so with matter, how much more indeed should it be with the spirit! The life that departs from the dying plant, retires within the bosom of earth, around the root perhaps of the decaying grain, or into some other part of the vast receptacle. There is always a power to vivify, in the earth. The breath of the Lord does never wholly abandon it. And the soul, in like manner quitting the body, hies away to its God to think and to act in some other form, to enjoy His favor, or to suffer His frown, until called, like the life at the root of the tree, to re-enter its clay. The body in the mean time has returned to its dust. It will then be revived, and the seed sown in corruption will be raised in incorruption, sown in weakness will

be raised in power, sown in dishonor will be raised in glory, sown a natural body, will be raised a spiritual body; altered as much in its gross, earthly aspect, as the substance which is changed to an aerial type, though unlike to that, preserving the resemblance of its mortal mould.

And this leads me to notice the third feature in common, between the resurrection of the body and the Easter of nature: which is a like connection of cause and effect. According to the character of the tree in the fall, such will be its character in the spring: and according to the character of the seed that is planted, such will be the product that grows up from its germ. A fig tree or a vine does not degenerate into a bramble, nor does a grain of maize bring forth a palm. The wild flower and the cultivated reproduce their likeness. And whatever their variety or their degree of perfection, the stalks that grow from them will correspond in type.

And just so, my hearers, this mortal frame. In form and structure and general outline the risen body will resemble this. Each human body will have its counterpart. There will be a diversity in the spiritual mould, bearing some relation to diversity in the natural.

And when the soul, which is really the life of the flesh, and in disunion from which it cannot subsist—

when this with that is taken into account—and one looks forward to their reviving hereafter, it is easy to see, (is it not easy to see?)—that varying with the condition of the soul in life—with its regenerate state or its unregenerate—with its moral attainments or its want of such—will be the condition of the immortal being. If a person on earth has been a Christian—he will be found a Christian in the resurrection, according to the measure of his holiness here, will be his holiness there. Differences in the degree of sanctification, will occasion differences in final glory. An Isaiah and a Paul will be found superior to the penitent thief. So differences likewise of mental capacity. A Newton and a drayman, as Dr. Johnson has said, will be perfectly happy through the faith of Christ: but the measure of happiness will differ in each. The ocean and the flower-cup may both be full—but the quantity filling them is widely diverse. There will be a gradation in many respects answering to the degrees of our earthly condition

And thus, my friends, if a drooping plant that lays down its head on the approach of winter, and dies to the root in the chilling change, re-appears in kind and style the same—oh, how much more shall a dying man, a creature made for an endless life, and placed here on purpose to prepare for Heaven, revive at last in state and character and mind the same as when he

threw off this fleeting coil, then a believer or an unbeliever, then a sanctified member of the body of Christ or a stranger to God and to Christian duty.

Oh, if so happy as to be found in Christ—how beautiful—beautiful will be the resurrection! The winter once more will be over and gone, the flowers of Life will appear upon the earth, the time of the singing of choirs of angels will be come, and the voice of the Saviour will be heard through the land.

Raised from the sod will be the forms inanimate. Re-clothing once more the bright spirits that dropped them, they shall be radiant vestures; and freed from every defect, they shall be a meet adornment for the state celestial. A new heaven and a new earth shall open around them. There shall be no more sin. No more sickness nor decay shall invade the realm. No death shall be there. Nothing to mar shall appear upon the beauty of Heaven. No imperfect feature, nor partial development shall be seen within it. All shall be complete, and full of life and love.

Alas! how different in respect to perfection, no less than in respect to freedom from change, is this state of ours. Here there s little that can claim the name of beauty, that is not improvable by the hand of man. The fairest landscape is the production of labor. The mead and the forest have to be trimmed. The waste places of the earth are brought under culture and the

stunted grass or the rank towering stalk gives place to wheat fields and vineyards, and orchards and gardens. Every plant that grows is susceptible of improvement. The commonest esculent is made better by art, and differs as much under diligent tillage from its native character, as the horse or sheep under careful training, from the same which roams in the wilds at large. There is seldom a scene that is perfectly lovely. The eye of the painter glances over the expanse of this world's creation, and selects the choicest and combines them together. Thus it is that the faultless is had.

And as it is with the natural, so it is with the moral; beauty of heart, beauty of temper, beauty of character, beauty of life is each a high attainment, and not the gift of birth.

And this fact, my brethren, is meant to teach us lessons: First, the need of working with the hand of God, as well in the world as in the field of piety. Paul must plant and Apollos water. The soil of the earth, just like the soil within, needs the attention of the faithful laborer: and though God alone can give the increase, the dews of His blessing will follow only effort. Again, we are taught that there are ideas of beauty in the soul of man that far surpass this mixed spectacle, which qualify him to appreciate the fair and lovely, and to extend their border. The human soul

is more truly culturable than the world of matter. It is a nobler creation than the earth we tread. It has capacities that unfold beyond this scene, which nothing here can fully satisfy. It has an eye to range over a vaster circle, to contemplate a scene of greater beauty: a wing to soar beyond this world, in a flight sublime above the heights of earth. And hence we perceive in the last place that a sphere more perfect, free from all defect and full of grace—is that which is fitted to an immortal creature. And that is Heaven. There is perfection. There the hand of art can no longer beautify, nor the taste of man conceive improvement. There is a home in which the undying spirit will find its element:—in the character of God, in holy companionship, in imperishable works, in enduring scenes, the Christian soul will be more than happy—blessed beyond the measure of desire and hope.

When the time shall come for entering fully on that, all will have passed indeed from death unto life. There will be no more sin, and hence no more destruction.

If you will turn to the passage from which I have taken the text, you will find that the change from death unto life is spoken of as an event belonging to this world. They who are joined by a living faith to Christ are assured in the Gospel that they shall never die. They are already partakers of everlasting

felicity. The boon is theirs—and they only go hence that they may possess it perfectly. Dissolution to them is not the death of the curse. It is not a destruction of soul and body in hell—but it is rather a transition from partial existence into the enjoyment of immortal blessedness.

When the Christian looks forward, he may anticipate a world which is fitted for him—and for which by God's grace he may also be fitted. He may be thankful for the prospect. He may take comfort from the thought when his friends precede him—departing in the true faith of Christ's holy name, they are but going to their home. 'Yet a little while, he shall not see them—but a little while and he shall see.'

Death is sad in itself, because of the separations it occasions. It unavoidably divides. To some, too, as a passage dark, lonely and uncertain, it is something they dread. With all their Christian trust, they shudder to approach it. Few men are so prepared, but that they would recoil from it at the first. We all need increase of grace, increase of trust, increase of faith in our only Saviour.

We all need, as well for confidence in our security, as for solace over friends asleep, to look beyond the swelling Jordan to the attractive prospect which bounds its farther shore. We need a vision like that of Moses. It is to draw us thither, that a revelation is

made. We have the glass of Scripture through which to see darkly. The presence of God, where is fulness of joy, shared by angels innumerable, and by the just made perfect, knit in companionships like those of earth, renewing their ties and uniting together around the person of Jesus; forms in the midst of scenes of beauty a sight too lovely for mortal gaze or for mortal conception.

We would not be unclothed, says the holy Apostle: we would be translated like Enoch. We would be caught up like Elijah without dissolution—with this body upon us to be changed in its passage—that mortality at once might be swallowed up of life.

Yet we would be absent from the body to be present with the Lord. And we look onward to the time when this creature itself with the whole creation of earth, shall be delivered from its bondage into glorious liberty.

My brethren who mourn, let me comfort you with the Scripture over the death of your loved. Sorrow not without hope. You believe that Jesus died and rose again. Even so you may believe that those who sleep in Him will God bring with Him.

Let the question be taken home to your own hearts, are you prepared to follow? Let this be the inquiry pondered seriously by us all: are we passed in spirit from death unto life? Have we the promise

sealed to us, ye shall never die? We must judge our own selves. Remember, it is a solemn truth, the Life immortal is begun on earth. Death is the reward of sin. Be not dead in its commission. Be not a victim of its condemnation. Behold there are set life and death before you, it is yours to choose. "I am the resurrection and the life," saith Jesus, believe on me.

Can you say with the patriarch, "I know that my *Redeemer liveth*, and though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God"? If a patriarch could say it, beholding in hope afar off his Lord, how much more ought you to be able to echo it, who have seen the Saviour almost face to face?

SERMON XXII.

WHAT IS YOUR LIFE?

"*What is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.*"—ST. JAMES iv. 14.
"*Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap.*"—GAL. vi. 7.

WHEN we stand looking back upon the past and forward into the future, our position is like that of a voyager on the deck of a vessel, who watches some cloudy night the phosphorescent belt in the wake of the keel, and turns from time to time to penetrate the gloom in front. The pathway of the ship over the darkling waters, is lighted up in the rear by animalcular life, sparkling and vanishing in the white foam of the sea. The surging elements behind him twinkle and glow as he advances, but lose their brightness in the far off distance: like remembered joys that glitter for a while, then go out, and are seen no more. But to the eye of the voyager, the ocean before him is an impenetrable waste. The dashing vessel cleaves it with her bow, guided by the lights of experience and her faithful needle, and plunges into darkness that no eye can

pierce.—How utterly baffled are we all in attempting to foresee the future! We know not so much as "what shall be on the morrow." But the past is luminous for a season. Memory shines back upon it. Its pleasures and its pains, its trials and its triumphs linger with a changeful distinctness upon its retrospect, until they faintly indicate the way we have travelled.—There is a mystery in such a state as seen from our worldly standpoint. That we should be shut up, as it were, to an item of time between a past only remembered and a future wholly concealed, and that we should "never continue in *one stay*," is a problem that demands something more than our reason to unravel it. What is Life? For what was it appointed? How can it be made enduring? How can its past be saved and secured to our possession? are questions that occur to a thoughtful mind, and for which it craves a reply.

Life, answers St. James, "is a vapor." We feel the force of the comparison. "It appeareth for a little while," then vanishes: that we know to be true. Whether we measure it by the distance from our birth until death,—much more, when we compute the length of its duration through the instant that is passing—for that is all that belongs to us—it is evanescent like a shadow.

Is it then made up only of independent moments, that are ours while they flit, and then are forfeited for-

ever? Is there no continuity? Is there no rounded oneness of this human existence? The words of the great Apostle settle such questions, for they intimate a sowing time and a harvest time in life which require that the two should be bound together. The reaping must follow after the planting of the seed: and so long as seed is planted, from which germination may be reasonably looked for, so long will there be coming a continuous future to realize its fruits and to link to itself all time preceding it.

Death, my brethren, is in strictness of speech only a new departure from some fresh starting place. It is an event not originally intended: it came as a punishment. It may not have been designed of God that man should stay here alway—but his removal, if effected, would have been brought to pass by some form of translation, that would have given no shock to nature and subjected it to no decay. As it is, death is itself converted by grace into a vehicle of change, by which, first, the liberated soul, and after that, the reanimated body is taken in glory to its God. And properly viewed, departure from this world is no more a suspension of active, living power, than is the exit of one from the bosom of his friends who goes abroad to make his permanent home in some far off country.

"Immortality was the condition of the Creation," says Bishop Sherlock, "and death came in as a surprise

upon Nature." "In the day thou eatest," it is recorded, "thou shall surely die," — by which it is plainly implied, that dying would not have followed without previous sin.

Reason infers the fact of a Future Life. Conscience points through a sense of accountability to it. The yearnings of affection and the aspirations of hope suggest its belief. Human capability and the limited space for its development in the term allotted to man, the boundlessness of his field for study, the inability of earth to satisfy him, and the capacity of his soul to find out and enjoy God—all confirm him in the thought of a life hereafter. But the Word of Revelation seals the evidence. "Life and Immortality are brought" effectually "to light through the Gospel" of the Son of God.

And now, my brethren, ask once more the question, What is life?—and I answer, It is the beginning of existence, the childhood, the first fleeting years of an unending future. It is the commencement of imperfect consciousness, that will be made, as we grow, so much fuller and clearer that the present will seem but partial. The stream that rises from some earthly spring enlarges into an ocean in Paradise and Heaven. It is shallow and pent up here, but it deepens and broadens beyond us. It impresses us as the vapor that appeareth now for a little time—but we must look

to its issues. It is fleeting in its duration, but it is abiding and permanent in its results.

And for what, was this life appointed? It was designed, as every part of it was designed, for a preparatory stage to something which comes later. It was intended for the sowing time for the harvest of the reaper. And whereas in the beginning it was much longer than now, whereas the fathers and the patriarchs looked forward to their end after the space of eight hundred and nearly a thousand years, that extended period was mercifully cut short, because men forgot their duty, and the wicked grew incorrigible and the righteous vexed their souls in the protracted term of their probation. It was mercifully cut short, I say, and narrowed down to the limits of threescore years and ten; which, in proportion to their brevity, man must use with the greater care, because upon their brief improvement depends his long hereafter. If he be careful to spend his life according to the will of God, he is promised eternal bliss through the merits and mediation of the Saviour of sinners. If he be negligent and disobedient, he is threatened with the "second death." And this arrangement holds good to every creature under heaven, in every age and country. Preparation for Life Immortal is the design of the trial school,—the seed time of the present.

Now such being the purpose, some light is thrown

upon the question, How can this ever vanishing state be made to abide? Or how can its past be secured to our possession for a perpetual inheritance?

If there be the connection spoken of between Time and Eternity, if the employment of this life be the discipline for the future, and its seed plot the reaping-field for the final garner, then plainly, the one can be preserved to the other in its positive attainments. When you look back, my friends, upon misspent opportunities and time wasted in idleness, the attempt to redeem that past, sadly disappoints you. You cannot appropriate its vanished possession. It is not yours any longer. It is lost to your hold. With what different impressions do you recall those hours which have been profitably employed, which have left the evidence of their passage in their gains behind them. They have not drifted away, like loose fragments floated upon the current that has swept rapidly by you—they are rather the rich deposits of its wealth in the fruitful soil of your hearts and lives. Every one knows how the training of his youth gives shape to his after years. No man is ignorant of the fact, that the achievements and acquirements of any one year of his life, are a new stepping-stone to still farther progress.

And what difference should Death make in the onward march of his spirit? Why should the springing up on the farther side of the grave be dissimiliar to

that on this side of the tomb, when the planting is the same? "As the tree falleth, so it lieth." "There is no repentance in the grave." Death is not the season to make those changes in human conduct which will lay the foundation for eternal happiness. It is attainment made by a right use of Time, that is a gain for Immortality.

But what sort of an attainment is it? Is it the heaping up of silver and gold, the building of goodly houses and the tilling of pleasant fields? Is it climbing to seats of honor and position? Is it making merry at banquets and rounds of amusement? Is it noble thought, brilliant fancy, the proud creation of human genius? Is it learning? Is it science? No. Very useful are silver and gold: quite lawful is the possession of wealth, desirable are places of influence, becoming is innocent pleasure, and ennobling and exalting are the achievements of the intellect, yea, and binding too, according to his gifts, upon every intelligent creature is its culture: yet, no one of them can be counted an immortal, imperishable boon. It is not in itself a preparation for Heaven. What is needful besides? What but Piety, to transmute them by its touch of grace — in consecrating wealth to right uses, improving honor and influence for the good of mankind, circumscribing the bonds and purifying the springs of amusement, directing the intellect to worthy objects, and

making genius and science tributaries to the highest well being of society, and not sappers of its faith in God and the word of a Revelation?

What, after all, is there in the things of this world to connect them with a better, but a spirit that fears God, and makes use of His gifts, under a sense of accountability to Him?

When one contemplates any specific end in life, he studies his qualifications for that particular end. He does not depend upon a general and indefinite preparation. So, in looking forward to the presence of God, the thought of His holiness, and of what He demands in the Gospel, in order to our fitness to meet Him, should make a most serious impression upon us all. It is not enough to be industrious, honest and well-meaning in our way—we must have repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. There must be a discipline and purifying of these corrupt hearts—a daily renewal of them by the Spirit of God. The virtues that spring from the Communion of the Saviour, innocency, integrity, truthfulness, benevolence, the graces of humility in exaltation, of patience in suffering, of meekness under injury, of forbearance under insult, of forgiveness, of love of enemies, of disinterested goodness, of heavenly mindedness—these must appear in our daily lives. These are possessions, which once actually made our own, become indefeasi-

ble for all time to come. These ought to command the principal attention of a human being. To repent of sin, to turn to the ways of obedience by prayer, by holy reading and holy Sacrament, and to labor every way in our power to cultivate the fruits of the Spirit, should be the foremost business of mortal life.

And yet the worldly studies and employments of time are not to be overlooked in any care for the soul; for these are incumbent in their due proportion and their proper place; but the principle of religion should infuse itself into them, to turn them into so many schools for its exercise, and convert them into helps and instruments of moral training for Immortality.

Can this be done? you inquire. Yes—the secular field of life is the appropriate and chosen province for the cultivation of Christianity. The occupation until the Master comes, of what He has given us, apart from its object of meeting the wants of this present, has the still farther object of qualifying us for a state of advancement. Let me illustrate for a moment. The prosperous business of a man, with its changeful successes and reverses, is a sphere for inspiring a sense of dependence upon God and teaching him the necessity of moderation in gain. The very act of managing one's earthly calling, in whatever branch of pursuit, as husbandry, commerce, mechanic arts, jurisprudence or government, even the work of the laborer and the task of the

housewife, are susceptible of a *religious* character, and when done with right aims and principles, as the duty of a creature in that state of life to which it has pleased God to call him, is a service which the Almighty accepts.

The social intercourse we indulge in is, in its turn, a sphere for cherishing sympathy and kindliness and exerting a Christian influence. Life's petty envyings and enmities are the school for forbearance and forgiveness. Its vexations and disappointments are a discipline for the temper. Its pleasurable excitements, ever tending to excess, are a summons upon principle to be watchful and self-denying. In fine, no state, no engagement, and no hour is without its lessons for the spiritual improvement of the learner.

Now the vocations which men follow, and the experiences they meet with, whether of joy or grief, will terminate with this world through which they are passing. The houses they erect will fall one day into ruin: and the riches they accumulate will take to themselves wings and fly away at the last: and the law they make and the art they discover will *eventually perish.* But what will remain? The cultivation of the heart and mind. The Christian sentiments and habits which they have made their employments the means of maturing. These will abide. The frail columns and arches, around which their Christian graces, wreathed like an orna-

ment, have lifted themselves aloft to heaven—will crumble and drop—but the encircling vine, taking hold on the firmament, will connect their earthly probation with everlasting reward.

And while business pursued for this world alone, and gains and acquisitions heaped up for mere enjoyment only—whether for one's self or one's children—will be bidden adieu to at death: the talents conscientiously occupied in doing good to others, in extending the Church, in disseminating the Gospel and in increasing human happiness, will be laid up as a treasure against the time to come in heavenly habitations. It will not be deposited on some glittering pile, but hidden and sown, like the fruitful seed, beside the waters of mercy, it will re-appear in the harvest, whose sheaves shall be borne by their grateful reapers to the bosom of Christ.

And while position and influence and every privilege of earth—and even the lowliest station and its cup of cold water only, may be turned into so many steps of ascent to the Presence of God—by a faithful use—they may also be cut off from enjoyment with the life that now is by their misimprovement.

This is just the difference between living for Immortality and living for Time alone. In the one case, every year, month, week and day of this mortal sojourn is treasured up by the believer and carried for-

ward with him into an unending existence. In the other, he profits by their quick consumption only until death. Departure from the body is but a transition for the one from a lower to a loftier plane, to the other it brings abruptly to a close, imperfect development.

Oh, how true is the Scripture, that according as a man "sows, accordingly shall he reap!" Of the fruits of his own exertion shall he gather, if the labor of his life be to qualify him for this world alone, and equally so, if to prepare him for the future. His recompense shall correspond with his work. He may so faithfully improve his days as to make their achievement tell on his condition forever, or he may restrict that benefit to time, or even forfeit it utterly.

Of the neglect of opportunities to make the most of his privilege will every one reap the consequences in compunction of spirit, in keen regret, in dissatisfaction with the portion which is left him at the end,—and in the encounter, if not the fear beforehand, of the penalty that awaits him—while, delightful contrast! he will reap of his fidelity, the approving witness of the Spirit bearing witness with his own spirit that he has walked with God, the comfort of a serene and elevating hope, the absence of fear in dissolution, the assurance of peace with the world and of favor with his Maker, and the sweet sense of sin forgiven, with an abun-

dant entrance through grace into the joy of his Lord.

My brethren and fellow sinners, "What is your life?" Ask yourselves seriously the question, "What is your life?" "It is a vapor," if you will make it so, bright or dreary though it be. "It is a vapor" in itself, whether you will or not, for it "appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away." But it enfolds in its mists the substance that endures forever. It wraps up in itself the germ of an immortal and imperishable existence, which may be made happy or hapless for eternity.

Treading as you do on the quicksand of time, your foothold never steady, the foundation beneath you constantly giving way—in a present ever fleeing and losing itself in the past, uncertain, unknowing of any future before you but that which grows legitimately out of the improvement you make of life,—Oh, how does it become you to number your few transient days, by applying your hearts to that holy and heavenly wisdom, whilst you live here, which in the end will bring you to everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

SERMON XXIII.

PROVIDENTIAL CARE.

"Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said: 'This is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the world.'"—ST. JOHN vi. 14.

THERE is a Providence in human history. Events come to pass and persons appear upon the stage under the manifest ordering of an Unseen Power. Anticipations are sometimes had of what is about to happen, which grow clearer as the time approaches, and prevail more widely as the day draws nigh.

That hope should be awakened of some coming good is not unnatural, and that this hope should give rise to its confident expectation, is every way reasonable—especially when the present is very hard to bear.

Of all the evils to which the world is liable, a cruel and oppressive government is one of the worst. People rightfully think that, "he who ruleth over men should be just, ruling in the fear of God;" and they picture to themselves a governor who shall be "as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, a morning

without clouds, or as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain." And it is not to be wondered at, if this picture of hope should look marvellously like in its outlines to the prediction of the Scripture: "A King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth."

If it were Hope *only*, that created this fair vision of the future or that gave rise to its creation in the minds of men for their relief from discouragement, it would be no matter of surprise. And far less would it be strange, if Hope should seize eagerly on it after it was once held out by Inspiration. But if being promised and foretold, no less than desired, anticipation of it should grow clearer as the time approaches for its fulfilment, and men should begin to look impatiently for it, and should be impressed with the fact of their nearness to it, is one of those mysteries which cannot be explained except by the admission that God's finger is in it.

The great God moves upon the springs of human thought and desire, and makes His creatures see—at least, feel and apprehend that some change is at hand. As a subtle influence from Himself stirs noiselessly among the roots and seeds of vegetation, preparatory to the appearance of vernal life, so His Spirit secretly operates upon the hidden soul before its awakening. It catches the sound of His footfall. It becomes

sensible of His approach. It perceives, without knowing how it comes to perceive it, that something extraordinary is about to occur.

This is the explanation, no doubt, of the general eagerness of the outlook, in which, not only the Jews, but Persians and Romans shared, as heathen historians have told us, about the time of the manifestation of Christ. They all waited with more or less of expectation for a Deliverer on the point of appearing.

We must bear this fact in mind when we read the record of the Gospel, which I have quoted for my text. "Then, those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, 'This is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the world.'"

They called Him a "*Prophet*," you notice, and *not a King*, but they meant the latter. They spake of Him as "that Prophet that should come into the world," because He had been named as such by the ancient lawgiver; but they invested Him notwithstanding with a royal dignity. For, as the evangelist goes on to tell us, "They would have taken Him by force to make Him a King"—even then and there, had not Jesus escaped out of their hands, and "departed again into a mountain Himself alone."

Which shows, moreover, besides the strength of their persuasion that the Messiah was before them, that they would anticipate, if they could, Providential

achievements, and carry them out to their completion in their own time and way; a time unripe and unmeet, and a way mistaken. "Thou sayest, that I am a King," said Jesus to Pilate, . . . "but now is My Kingdom not from hence." He plainly intimates His kingly character and that the kingdoms of this World will become one day the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, but not for the present. And meanwhile He restrains the minds of men, who would go before His steps, and defeats their endeavors, showing how completely He governs in history and presides Himself over all its movements and actors.

Keeping in view then, beloved, this strange predisposing as well as checking of men's thoughts by a power above themselves, and remembering that the multitude whom Jesus fed in the wilderness were quite prepared to receive Him, even in advance of His miracle, as they had received John before Him, though he "did no miracle," what was there, let us ask, in the supernatural provision of a Feast in the Desert, to give emphasis to their faith? Why should this have been a singularly marked occasion of drawing forth from them all an acknowledgment of their belief—such as it was?

I answer, unquestionably, it was the consonance of this miracle with their preconceived ideas of the character of their King, as All merciful and All powerful.

Let us look at this miracle a little in detail. Here they were in a wilderness, that is, an uninhabited section of country, where no house opened to them its hospitality and no market was near to furnish them a supply. The Saviour had held them by His side by His delightful discourse, until the day was well spent. They were weary and hungry. The shadows of the afternoon had begun to fall upon them, and night would overtake them before they could reach a village.

All at once, as if "a table" had been "spread" for them "in the wilderness," as if the skies had dropped manna, and honey out of the rock had flowed for their refreshment, they found a repast provided for them, which proved as ample as it was welcome. They were ordered to be seated upon the green grass at their feet; and then, through their orderly ranks, the five loaves and two fishes, which a poor peasant boy carried in his basket either for food or barter, being first blessed by their Distributor, were dealt out by the twelve to every man, woman, and child of their numerous company.

As they sat and were fed, they could not have but turned gratefully toward the face of their Benefactor. Here is our Friend, they thought, One who takes care for our welfare, who sympathizes with us, and waits not to be asked in our necessity for His help. This indeed must be the Prophet, like unto Moses, raised

up by the Almighty from among his brethren, and therefore our Brother, although our Head. This is the Messiah, that we have tarried for and wanted.

They unconsciously perceived the great beauty of the Incarnation, that is, of the assumption of humanity by Him who came down from Heaven, of which not one of them probably had any intelligent idea. But they were aware of what they needed, a Ruler who could be touched with a feeling of their infirmities, a Ruler of tender heart as well as lofty wisdom—in whose affection they could trust and in whose loving consideration for their good they could place their confidence.

And is not this the Saviour that we all require? Call Him by what name you will, Prophet, King, Deliverer, Exemplar, Advocate, He is no less than the Lord over our destinies, and our Guide and Keeper forever. Can we dispense with His fellowship and fraternal sympathy in our dependence upon Him? In our sorrow for sin, our fear of its punishment, our shortcomings in duty, our doubts as to the way in which we should walk and our peril from enemies, can we possibly do without His All-merciful, because All Human, though equally Divine superintendency and guardianship over our steps?

And I ask, my brethren, is not the discipleship which copies after Him, that which attracts the poor

world around us to the Cross? The Church that exemplifies the spirit of Jesus, that is kind, considerate and compassionate in its bearing, leads the spectator to rest content with the claims of its Religion, and to exclaim of its Author: "This is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the world!"

But the *All-Power* of Jesus. This entered quite as considerably into the effect of His miracle upon the multitude, as did His mercy. And this was shown in two ways, one of them direct, and the other indirect.

When our Saviour addressed Himself to feeding the five thousand collected about Him, He put forth to appearance no unusual power. There was no multiplying of the loaves in number or quantity. Loaf was not added to loaf and fish to fish under His hand; but they grew in their distribution, no doubt, like the provision of nature itself in soil and in sea; as the widow's vessel of oil, which held out as long as there were vessels to be filled from its solitary jar, and was only stayed when there were no farther receptacles to be had.

The Saviour, of His royal bounty, gave to the people in the desert as much as they would. He came to them like a King whom it did not impoverish to befriend; Who had bread enough and to spare, in His abundant store-house. He fed them, dear brethren, as God feeds us daily, by the mystery of providence.

Where it comes from, how it is furnished, and in what manner it escapes from being exhausted, can only be told by the wealth that there is with God. This was the explanation of the Miracle of Jesus. The multitude were struck with His Godlike capacity. The Apostles, as never before, were confirmed in their belief of His infinite power; for they had timidly brought to His notice the feeble instruments by which He worked such wonders, and they were awed. They did not talk about it, nor parade it, nor put it on record for its wonderfulness. The multitude may have expressed their astonishment, but they all felt, Apostles and people alike, they all felt that nothing need to be said upon the subject, but they might act from that moment as if their King stood before them, clothed in the majesty of God.

But I have said, there was an indirect way in which Christ showed his power. This was by directing them after they had eaten, to "gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost."

What was the immediate object of Jesus in this Commandment? It was to teach, no doubt, the Divine lesson of *economy* in the use of gifts, and to point attention to the greatness of the miracle by the magnitude of its results. But I think there was also another object in view, which was to bring before men's minds, *indirectly*, I call it, because it would not have appeared

but for an after-observation, to bring before their minds the utter exhaustlessness of the riches of the goodness of God, by which things multiply when rightly used, and leave more at every stage for enjoyment than has been consumed already.

A profound truth underlies all this which we must not fail to discover. When we want to satisfy ourselves of a Providential care over ourselves and the world, we do not simply look at our every day blessings or over the returns of a year, but we turn our thoughts and our eyes toward those vast depositories out of which a fresh draught is continually taken, but which rather increase than diminish with every demand upon them.

Take an illustration. The earth annually brings forth to the husbandman the yield of the soil. The harvest in amount is so far beyond any comparison with the seed that was sown, that what has died out in the ground is as nothing to the life that subsequently springs up from its own decay. Here is a little spot of earth cultivated for a handful of people. The people reduplicate their numbers and yet there is enough to maintain them all. A nation tills the lands it inhabits, and the nation enlarges, and other nations at times look to it for their bread, and still it produces plenty for all. The population of the globe increases from thousands to millions, and from millions to hun-

dreds of millions, and though the sceptical might doubt in advance the capability of the globe to sustain its increase, yet the actual returns from its cultivation are sufficient in a single country, like this for example, or might be sufficient, if required, to supply the world.

When one reflects, not only on the harvest, but on other resources of Nature for fuel and raiment, which know no limit, he must acknowledge of a truth that there is a *Providence* over us, and in this Providence—God.

Draw a confirmation from the Church.

For fifteen hundred years and more the Jews were the only people of God. When the doors were thrown open to the Gentiles, and all the world was bidden to the feast of the Gospel, it might well have been asked respecting the first bearers of its tidings, "What are they among so many?" And yet no sooner did they begin their task, than nations were converted almost as in a day, and the work of evangelization still progresses. The Church at no stage has exhausted success. On the contrary, with every movement forward, her prospects have brightened, and her equipment for her duty has become more complete with each successive attempt. Never so encouraging as now was the outlook of her Missions.

As one wave propels another to the shore, and breaks at last upon the sands with the whole weight

of the advancing column, so power accumulates upon power in the spread of Christianity.

No one fact stands alone and by itself. The feast of the five thousand in the wilderness had connection with things that came after it, and its fragments ordered to be collected, were intended to be used again.

Our Saviour gave utterance to this same great truth on another occasion and in a different form. "Herein," He said to His disciples, "is that saying true, 'One soweth and another reapeth.' Ye reap that whereon ye bestowed no labor: other men labored, and ye are entered into their labors." In the day of small things went forth your predecessors, bearing precious seed, but weeping as they went for the small promise before them; but ye shall shortly come again rejoicing from the field, bringing your sheaves with you.

The Author of the Proverbs has told us, that "children's children are the crown of old men, and the glory of children are their father's;" meaning thereby to teach us, that no man really in earnest in bettering his own condition, or in making the world better for his doings, can think with indifference of his offspring. They are to carry forward his work, and perpetuate and enlarge in themselves whatever he himself has attained to. In them is to be "*crowned*" his own individual undertaking, generation after generation. Hence

he looks to them with the profoundest interest: as Abraham to his son Isaac, whom it was surely a bitter trial to sacrifice—to the disappointment of his hope: or as the elder Burke to his son, whose early decease brought the shadow of the tomb prematurely over the parent; or as the noble Selwyn, ordering a midnight service in the Cathedral of Lichfield, to correspond in time with the Consecration of his son at the antipodes, to take up his pastoral staff among the heathen.

No parent who thinks and devises noble things in his day can be indifferent to their prosecution at the hand of his descendants. And descendants in turn, whose glory is their fathers, who inherit, with their trusts and acquisitions, the weight of a lofty name, can never tell under what obligation they are for what they receive; nor, as they gather up the fragments of their liberal patrimony, can they be indifferent, if worthy, to the duty of making these fragments still larger, if they can, under the good Providence of God.

Fragments increase in amount to every heir to their possession so long as the world stands. Opportunities multiply with time. There is more material wealth, more intellectual and spiritual wealth, as society advances. It may not be in individual hands, but in society as a whole. The comforts and privileges and powers procured by Civilization and the Gospel, are shared more fully by all classes of men as history goes

forward. The achievements of all the past stand behind each of us to-day. We are better off, for an ancestry numbering the good and the great. Inferior descendants have more than superior parents had in their time. We stand on the shoulders of the dead, and therefore can see farther; we have the benefit of their example and attainment, and can start where they stopped when their race was run.

Of course, all this is to be received with the qualification, that children resemble their parents and are blessed in their persons and conditions, as they were.

But what is the bearing upon the point immediately in hand? The bearing is this: It illustrates and strengthens the position, that the superabounding provision of God never lessens by consumption, but reveals new wealth the more it is drawn from, and accumulates "fragments" after every fresh taste and improvement of its gifts. This shows that God is behind it. It impresses us with the conviction that its Author is God. When we gather up the "fragments" of observation and experience, and reflect upon them, we feel that there is a Divinity in human history shaping its course, and in the stores opened to its enjoyment.

And so, as the multitude stood before Jesus, and saw His power, like that of the Almighty in Nature and Providence, they were struck with the exhaust-

lessness of its Source of supply, and they craved His Kingship.

And as we, dear brethren, with a larger survey of His bounty, having seen the "fragments" of His provision grow continually larger as time rolls on, having seen His Church extended through the world, nations converted to its rule, its opportunities, capabilities and furnishings for a still farther spread, increasing age by age, the martyrs enriched by Apostles preceding them, and they in turn transmitting an heritage to descendants more valuable than they received, every saintly name carrying a blessing in its memory, and every holy writing accumulating worth from its association with the good who have profited by it and passed it on to successors:—when we have seen these things, and have "gathered up" with them "the fragments" of our own individual experience, and considered how the goodness of God to us has increased with years, and how the adaptation of the Gospel to meet our needs has opened upon us every day the older we have become, I am sure I but express the thought of every Christian before me, when I say, that the claims of Jesus of Nazareth to be the "Prophet" of the world, and its Messiah and Prince, are verified beyond all doubt by this ever unfolding testimony to His power and Godhead.

I feel, my beloved, as I take into my hand the blessed

Gospel of Jesus, and recollect the long and heaven-made channel through which it has come down to me, that it speaks more to my heart than it ever could have spoken to its first recipients. I feel that however inestimable its gift may have been to others along the way, it is still more inestimable to you and me for the many who have prized it; and that we, by God's grace, shall pass it on to our children, not without still farther association that will make it precious to them, and may lead them to discern ever growingly in it their relation to Jesus.

I do not believe that any other Religion than Christianity can boast of commending itself with increase of power the longer it exists. Buddhism, for example, has made many millions of converts, and Mohammedanism also. They made rapid progress quite early by some mixture of truth, abetted by force. And with the lapse of centuries, their vast numbers, their time-honored traditions, and the natural hold of parents on children and rulers on people, have given them a sort of stability in the East. But I do not believe they have anything better to offer to-day, if so good, as they had twelve hundred or twenty-four hundred years ago. Their good wine was served out at the beginning, and not kept to the last. No value has been added to their original possessions by their spiritual use and improvement among the nations to whom they were im-

parted. No stores of religious experience have been gathered together with the lapse of the ages to make each successive generation better off than that before it. The Buddhist and the Moslem of to-day are heirs to no pious inheritance, which has taken on new volume and lustre with time, but on the contrary, have lost purity, truth, fervor and power, which they had measurably for a while.

How happily is it otherwise with the Christian Religion! The Blessed Master made promise of larger achievements in the future than any which had been done already. "*Greater* things than these shall ye do," said He to the disciples, "because I go to my Father." The Spirit shall teach you *more* than I have taught, because ye have not been able to bear it. The fragments of your feast, if you will only stop to take them up, will always be found more ample than that you have eaten. This is the Saviour you need. Incarnate, Compassionate, your Brother, He is also Divine and full of Power. He is "Jesus Christ the Righteous." His rectitude is accepted for you and is a pledge of His righteous government. He will make you righteous like Himself, if you follow His steps. Your souls shall be washed in His blood and your lives shall be renewed by His Spirit.

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